613 every adult member is a matrilineal descendant of a single ancestress, or a spouse of
609 one of these people. All husbands are called *alamu* by the male members of the descent group, but husbands call each other by the kinship terms for older and younger
[601] brother (i.e. *achimwene* or *apwanga*) according to the seniority of their wives. Similarly undifferentiated in kinship terms are the wives of all men of the descent group, who call each other 'sister'.

591 The husband is expected to work in his wife's garden, to help his mother-in-law,
606 and also, in the early stages of marriage, to avoid her. His attitude to his father-in-law is one of respect, relaxing as time goes on. His attitude to his wife's brother is also one of respect, which covers feelings of latent hostility. Although husband and wife's brother co-operate in affairs relating to the woman and her children (e.g. they jointly consult the diviner in case of illness, and the brother-in-law hears grievances the husband may have against his wife), there are elements of conflict arising from their competition for the affection of the woman and her children.

591 Patrilocal marriages are the rule in certain cases. The village headman commonly
[illegible] has his wife in his own village. At his death his widow may return to her own village,
but if her daughters have married locally she may stay, and one of her sons, as warden
of his sisters, will also stay and marry patrilocally, as did his father, the headman.
631 Thus a new matrilineal descent group, linked to that of the headman by a patrilineal link, develops. In every generation the number of separate but related matrilineal descent groups would double, and at such a rate of proliferation it might be expected that any village would contain many family groups. In fact, however, most members of a village can trace their descent from a common ancestress removed not more than about five generations. There are two reasons for this degree of homogeneity in the kin-grouping in the villages. One is that the villages tend to split up as they become
[582] too large and complex. The other is that the introduction of a new matrilineal descent group is often avoided by a cross-cousin marriage by the headman of the village or the warden of a sorority group.

605 There is a joking relationship between cross-cousins, that is, for example, between the village headman's children and his sisters' children. The latter, as members of his
583. descent group, have interests and loyalties opposed to those of his own children. Although there is a strong tradition of cross-cousin marriage, such marriages are said to be likely to be unstable.

BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE

584 Child betrothal was common among the Yao. Acceptance of a loin-cloth and the wearing of it was token of betrothal, giving the groom exclusive rights over the girl.[1] The negotiations for an adult marriage are conducted by senior matrilineal kinsmen of the parties, who at the subsequent ceremony act as witnesses or sureties to the marriage. Usually the senior is the mother's brother, and the junior the brother. The
585 act of validation, the Chiputu rite, takes place some time after the husband and wife have been living together. They meet in the hut of the woman for the rite, which consists in eating two pots of porridge, prepared by the female relatives of each party. The man's people bring a cockerel and the woman's a hen for relish. The exchange of food symbolizes the exchange of members of each matrilineal kin group, which is

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[1] Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. 118; Johnson, 1897, pp. 411–13.

175 never to have had any large-scale central political organization, and their history is full of occasions when one group of Yao has attacked another. Even within his own area the authority of the chief was not, apparently, sufficiently strong to prevent one village (22) headman from raiding his neighbours; the chief maintained no standing army.[1] The 631 chief held certain rights and privileges. He was entitled to the ground tusk of any elephant found in his territory (the finder was rewarded after it had been sold, with a cloth); he received tribute in food,[2] with which he entertained visitors. He took a share of the spoils of war and was also entitled to annual labour service and to a gift when he made a new burial place. Apart from his military and judicial responsibilities, he had authority to settle when and where initiation ceremonies should be held.[3] The right to hold these ceremonies was sought after by the village headmen as a mark of [553] status.[4] The chiefs or headmen of certain families had the right to wear a white cloth bound round their temples as insignia of rank.[5]

In addition the chief had a certain ritual status. He was thought to incur mystical danger by contact with death, and so was not allowed to attend a funeral nor to eat a chicken brought by a messenger announcing a death, nor to accompany his military expeditions. He was supposed to have great power through special medicines. He had to make offerings to the ancestors, especially in affairs concerning the whole people, [566 such as drought or epidemic. He was expected to give a burial cloth at the death of an 784 important man. At his death a period of social disorganization was recognized, members of his village were allowed to pillage and rape, until he was buried.

Succession to the chiefly office was matrilineal. The chief's position was based partly on his status as the senior male of his own matrilineal kin group, partly on his wealth. His command over slaves, guns, and caravans to the coast was greater than that of others, and from these his military strength was derived, for a chief was powerless without his following of dependants. The chief of the area was also headman of his own village. In fact, the position and duties of a village headman (except that he could not exact tribute)[6] reproduced in small scale those of the chief. The headmen also were in mystical danger through contact with death and were the channel through which the ancestors were approached in affairs concerning the village. They, too, built up their prestige and wealth by slaving activities. They seem to have been largely independent of the chief, carrying on slave raids of their own, and if they could gain a sufficient following, they might break away from the chief, and set up their own chiefdoms.[7]

631 The chief ruled through a hierarchy of headmen. His councillors were superior headmen, placed over a number of village headmen. Commoners could approach the chief only through the councillor in whose area their village belonged. The councillor's special duties were to report daily to the chief on the affairs of his district, to advise, and to arbitrate in the chief's own domestic affairs, e.g. in conflicts between the chief and his brothers and nephews. The councillors were not necessarily relatives of the chief,[8] but were chosen on account of their general status in the community, and their

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[1] Elmslie, a. 1899, p. 109, says of the Yao in the Shire highlands: 'Every tenth man one met might be set down as a chief . . . petty quarrels of petty chiefs were abundant. . . .' See Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 169 and 192.

[2] Stannus, a. 1910, says that only beer was owed to him.

[3] Ibid., p. 239.

[4] Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. 18; Werner, 1906, p. 260.

[5] Ibid., pp. 30 and 298.

[6] Duff, 1903, p. 300.

[7] Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. 193.

[8] Ibid., p. 198.

office tended to become hereditary. Each councillor had his own village which he 63
administered as a headman. A second set of officials were the court assessors, *mapesye*, who, unlike the councillors, were not in charge of villages of their own in addition to their court duties. Their office was not hereditary and they were chosen for their [592
wisdom and their debating ability. They lived at the court of the chief and their main 594]
duty was to sift the evidence in the judicial cases which came before him.

The village headmen were expected to send elephant tusks to the chief (receiving [661]
small gifts in return), and to invite him to a yearly beer drink. Like the chief, the village headman governed through a council of the most important men in his village. They 631
constituted a kind of village court over which he presided, and in the old days he 642
could give capital sentence, or award a fine of as many as four slaves. Appeal from his decision lay to the court of the superior headman, or to the chief. Important cases would be reported direct to the chief. Most crimes would be settled by compensation. In cases of murder, several slaves were paid to the kin of the victim, and a fine for spilling blood to the chief. When compensation was handed over, the recipient always returned some part of it as sign that friendship was restored.[1]

Macdonald's further account of the treatment of crime shows how weak was the 696
political organization, in spite of the apparent orderliness of the system of inferior and superior courts. A murderer caught red-handed might be killed at once. If captured alive he might be ransomed on payment of a fine of from four to twenty slaves, [567]
some of whom might be killed to accompany the dead. If the murderer escaped a relative of his would be captured and ransomed. This applied to murders occurring among parties friendly to one another and living in the same village. If the murderer was from another village, the injured village, if strong enough, would fall upon the other and kill and enslave the inhabitants. If not strong enough, the chief might be called in to help to annihilate the guilty village.[2]

Modern Administration

631
In the whole of Nyasaland there must be between thirty and forty Yao chiefs. In 622
the districts of Liwonde, Fort Johnston, and Zomba, where 80 per cent. of the Yao 178
population is concentrated (1931 boundaries), there are at least fifteen such chiefs. Not all those who have the rank of chief in the old Yao system are recognized as Native Authorities or even as Sub-Native Authorities by the Nyasaland Administration, and many Sub-Native Authorities would be full chiefs in the Yao system, and quite independent of the Native Authorities under whom they are placed.

Nowadays the chief has lost many of his former claims to status. He no longer has monopoly of the trade to the coast, for goods are brought in by Indian traders and bought by African tobacco growers or returned labour migrants. He can no longer use his slaves to increase his wealth by running slaving expeditions. His tribute of food and ivory has ceased, and he can no longer entertain lavishly, but he is still expected to give burial cloths and to make gifts to headmen on their succession to office. Some of his councillors have been made court assessors, and are paid for these duties, but others are expected to work for him unpaid. Some chiefs do reward councillors who retain their traditional status but are not officially recognized as assessors by the

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[1] Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 196 ff.; Stannus, a. 1910, p. 289.

[2] Macdonald, op. cit., pp. 170-1.

622 631 178 Administration, but many cannot afford to do this. The people regard the taxes they pay to the Administration as a substitute for the chief's tribute. As the Native Authority the chief appears to be responsible for tax-collection, as the tax-clerk lives at the court.

631 692 643 The chief is responsible to the Administration, among other things, for latrine construction and for punishing the infringement of various regulations. His main duties are judicial, as judge of the Native Authority Court. The bureaucracy attached to the Native Authority includes a number of functionaries, e.g. Kawinga's, in 1947 one of the larger courts, had 1 court clerk, 1 assistant court clerk, 1 community worker, 1 forest guard, 1 agricultural demonstrator, 1 sanitary inspector, 9 court messengers, 2 caretakers, 4 garotta men, 1 market clerk, 1 market sweeper, 6 court assessors. These are paid by the Native Treasury. Court assessors help in the arbitration of cases. The key position at court is held by the court clerk, and usually he is not a Yao, but an Nguru, who, because he is literate, is the medium of all written communications to and from the chief. The court sergeant is the correct channel of approach to the chief, and the court messengers represent the chief to the villages.

631 622 The territory of a Native Authority is divided into 'administrative villages', under officially recognized and paid headmen. Within these areas there are clusters of huts, which do not form officially recognized administrative units, but which are none the less villages under their own hereditary headmen. The administrative village headman is responsible for the payment of taxes in his area, and for the observance of various regulations. He is usually a man with some standing in the Yao social system: one who has the right to conduct a boys' initiation ceremony, or to wear the head-band signifying rank. His authority is derived partly from his status as a senior kinsman, partly from his status as a village headman. If the administrative village under him includes a number of hamlets unrelated to the administrative village headman, he will delegate his responsibilities in these hamlets to their own headmen. Consequently, since village headmen perform administrative duties, whether they are officially recognized or not, there is competition among them for the official posts. In order to bring pressure to bear on the chief to make him concede marks of rank, they may threaten to move out of his area, and so to deplete his following. In spite of this bargaining tool, the position of the village headman *vis-à-vis* the chief is said to be getting progressively weaker. Cases once tried by them are now being taken to the chief's court, and the latter is able to draw on the power of the Administration to establish his dominance over the headmen.

631 648 178 The chief in the modern system stands as the representative of the people to the white Administration, and as the representative of the white Administration to the people. One reason for the lack of direct contact between the Administration and the people is the fact that Yao is not the official language of the district, and therefore Yao interpreters are necessary.

There are some occasions when the chief and his officials perform the functions proper to their office under the old social system. The white Administration is not concerned with their ritual functions, nor with initiation rites, nor does it take cognizance of witchcraft offences. Accusations of witchcraft are judged by the same personnel as accusations of theft or adultery, but they are not dealt with in the court house, nor recorded in the book.

Land Tenure

The rules governing land tenure were those which would be expected of a society which suffered from no land shortage. A man was entitled to as much land as he could cultivate, the limitation being that he should consult the headman as to his neighbours' boundaries. Abandoned gardens could only be taken up with the permission of the original cultivator.[1] 623

MAIN CULTURAL FEATURES

Religion

The Yao are largely Islamized. Codrington remarked that the propagation of this faith was distinctly antagonistic to British influence, and it received considerable attention from chiefs and headmen. Schools for the instruction of youth in reading and writing Swahili in Arabic characters were established in nearly every village, where also prayers were made at regular intervals in the day. The Moslem fasts and feasts were also observed, and the Yao were not inclined to embrace Christianity.[2] Their conversion to Islam did not take place till the nineteenth century, long after their first introduction to the Arab traders at Kilwa and Zanzibar, although they had adopted Swahili modes of dress much earlier.[3] 771 787

According to Hetherwick, Islam is strongest on the lake shore and on the east border of Nyasaland, chiefly round the old slave-trade centres. Makanjira's on the south-east side of the lake, and Domira Bay on the west, were the centres of Moslem propaganda. The Moslem population around Zomba and Blantyre consists mainly of Yao men, who have built themselves mosques in their own villages, or use the large mosques of Indian Moslem merchants. In the west districts, lower Shire, Ruo, central Shire, Lilongwe, Fort Manning, the Moslem population does not total more than 750. In the districts round Fort Johnston and Kotakota, the Moslems are one-third of the total population, while in Zomba district they number one-fifth.[4]

The Yao pagan religion was a form of ancestor worship. Apart from diviners and medicine men, there was no regular priestly profession. Intercession with the ancestors was performed by the chief, on behalf of the chiefdom, by the headman on behalf of the village, and by the head of the matrilineal kin for his dependents.[5] A man was qualified to approach his ancestors individually only if he had been initiated and had a house of his own.[6] 771 761

Some of the ritual duties of the chief have already been mentioned. When his people were visited by drought or epidemic, or when he fixed the day for the beginning of the millet harvest, he made an offering of flour and of beer poured into a pot in the ground at the grave of a dead chief. The village headman made similar offerings to the spirit of his dead predecessor. The spirits of the dead Nyanja chiefs, ousted by the Yao invasion, were regarded as still powerful in the homeland of their people. For instance, Kangomba, whose shrine was on Mount Sochi, used to be appealed to for rain, and on the principle that the most appropriate mediator between a dead man and the living is a descendant of the former, the Yao chief, Kapeni, when he wished to propitiate 771 631 632 775 783

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[1] Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. [illegible]; Stannus, a, 1910, p. [illegible].
[2] Codrington, 1898, p. [illegible]; see also Hughes, p. [illegible].
[3] Young, T. C., a, 1932, p. [illegible].
[4] Hetherwick, a, [illegible], p. [illegible].
[5] Werner, 1906, p. [illegible]; Stannus, a, 1910, p. [illegible].
[6] Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. [illegible].

soon erected. As early as 1893 the Protectorate was divided 175
into Administrative divisions and Collectors were appointed in 648
each. Coinage was issued; a hut tax of 3s. was introduced; European claims to land and mineral rights were settled with the chiefs—all large estates were issued with certificates of claim; and a postal system was initiated. The old order of independent chiefdoms had gone for good and the Africans had to adjust their way of living to a new order.

THE VILLAGE AS A UNIT IN PRE-WHITE TIMES

Though there are earlier records of villages among related 175
tribes, the earliest we have of the Yao are those of Livingstone.[1] 621
In the records of his journeys up the Shire and the Rovuma Rivers, he states that the people lived in villages. Rowley's reports[2] of the Shire Highlands in 1861 show that the Nyanja were organized in villages similar to those of to-day, but the best reports on the Yao village are by Duff MacDonald, who worked as a missionary in the Shire Highlands and the Zomba area from 1878 to 1881. Duff MacDonald published both a general ethnographic account of the Yao around Blantyre and a journal of day-to-day events on the mission. From these descriptions we are able to reconstruct much of the political organization of Yao groups before the Whites came to Nyasaland. Though the information from these early accounts about the internal structure of villages is scant, the reports of the importance of domestic slavery are good, and this is valuable in assessing its effect on the internal structure of modern Yao villages.

From MacDonald's description it appears that each Yao chief- 175
dom was a congeries of almost autonomous villages. The 622
headmen of these villages recognized the superiority of one of their number whom we may call "chief". The unity of each village and its corporateness were expressed in many ways. One of these was in connection with the worship of ancestor spirits. MacDonald writes:

> [The village headman] is the recognized high priest who presents prayers and offerings on behalf of all that live in his village. . . . It

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[1] Livingstone, D. and C., *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries, and of the Discovery of Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa.* 1858-64, John Murray (London, 1865). Waller, *Last Journals.*

[2] Rowley, *The Story of the Universities' Mission.*

175 is his relatives that are the village gods. Everyone that lives in the
622 village recognizes these gods but if anyone removes to another village he changes his gods. He now recognizes the gods of his new chief. One wishing to pray to the god (or gods) of any village naturally desires to have his prayers presented through the village chief, because the latter is nearly related to the village god, and may be expected to be better listened to than a stranger.[1]

In this quotation the word 'chief' is used for village headman. In Yao the same term is used for both the chief of the country and the chief of the village (*mwenye*).

175 It is clear from MacDonald's description that foreign villages
622 were looked upon as undifferentiated wholes. When discussing
681 punishment in general he writes:

691 We find that almost every offence may be punished by death, but when an offender is not redeemed, the particular punishment is left to the headman of the injured party. For instance, if a headman of Kumpama's go and say, 'Chesyono has killed a subject of mine; I have caught a subject of his and want to kill him,' the chief's answer will be, 'He has done you wrong, do according to your heart (*pali mtima wanu*).' The punishment is thus inflicted not by the criminal's own chief, but by the injured party, and it may fall, not on the guilty person, but on one connected with him.[2]

For example, he describes how some children had been carried off from Che Lomoni's village one night in 1880.

Towards the end of 1880 [he recounts], Che Lomoni, a Blantyre headman, captured two men from Mpingwi, and put them in slave-sticks. They belonged to the village that had kidnapped the children a few months before, and native law did not require proof that the men were personally guilty. They were undoubtedly innocent. Still they were kept in close confinement till their friends returned the captives in February.[3]

175 The village headman—called the 'owner of the village'
622 (*mwene musi*)—was the representative of the village in all public transactions, and also the representative of such higher authority as existed, to the village members. Duff MacDonald writes: 'A chief represents and is responsible for all his people. If anyone wish to treat with a native village it is with the village

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[1] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 65.

[2] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 186.

[3] MacDonald, *Africana*, ii. 234.

chief that he must deal. If we give a present to a village it is to the village chief that we must give it'; and, 'It is when a man transgresses against his own village chief that *personal responsibility* is brought home to him. When he transgresses against another village, his own chief pays for him.'[1] The village headman accepted liability for offences committed by his villagers against members of other villages, but could punish his own villagers by fines and by putting them into slave-sticks. Within the village, according to MacDonald, 175 622

> The headman cannot make his villagers hoe his farm for him, or do such private work. Neither does he exact tribute from them. . . . Still he expects them not only to stand by him in war, but to support his government on all occasions, and to render special assistance in the trial of judicial cases. . . . He may pronounce a capital sentence, or order as large a penalty as the fine of four slaves—especially if he be a higher headman. But his judgements may be complained of by any of his free subjects (only such appeals are rare, unless by parties that want to leave his village altogether). His decision *may* be revised by some other headman, as the ruler of the village from which his own settlement broke off; but the ultimate appeal is to the chief of the country. While the village headman settles all smaller disputes without troubling the chief, he usually reports graver cases.[2]

THE CHIEF AND THE VILLAGE HEADMEN: THE POLITICAL PROCESS

The village headmen in any particular area recognised the superiority of one of their number, the chief of the land (*mwenye chilambo*). MacDonald classifies the headmen under one chief as follows: 175 565 622 643

> i. Chief's blood relatives, usually called 'younger brother'.
> ii. Settlers or refugees (*alendo*) who have come over with a large following from a hostile chief.
> iii. Men who have gained the chief's favour by their services and been sent to occupy new spots in the kingdom.

'Other village headmen arise when a large village increases and sends forth smaller hamlets.'[3] All in the territory of a chief were integrated by a chain of authority. As he explains,

> 1. Headmen are under higher headmen and under the chief.

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[1] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 186. Original italics.
[2] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 155. [3] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 156.

175 2. Free men are under their elder brother in the first instance, but
565 they may carry their cases to the headman of their village or
622 even to the chief of the country.
643 3. Slaves were entirely under their own master.[7]

The headmen's subservience to the chief is described in the following passage:

> In all public transactions the headman represents his village. He receives the chief's orders and sees them carried out. When he kills [651] an elephant he sends one of the tusks to the chief. Should he kill twenty elephants he is not expected to give up twenty tusks—two or three would be sufficient. If he shoots a large buck he gives one haunch of venison. For all such tributes he expects to receive in [646 593] return a present (generally a little powder). . . . He is expected to attend the chief's parliaments unless he is under an elder brother in which case he is not allowed to speak, except when especially commissioned. Headmen are expected to report all cases of war, but they often attack enemies without telling their chief beforehand, saying, [721] "Let him hear of the enterprise when it succeeds." Yet this is dangerous unless they are sure of success, and well acquainted with the chief's private sentiments. On reporting an attack they present the chief with part of the booty. In times of war each headman when sum- [687] moned, must follow his chief's flag, otherwise his village is burned down, and all that fail to escape are killed or enslaved.[8]

175 Yet within the framework of this organization villages were markedly autonomous. MacDonald's description, which I have 578 just quoted, brings this out very well. Elsewhere he writes: 622 "The chief may often have less influence than powerful headmen, 643 and we have known cases where he simply contented himself with grumbling when his headmen acted contrary to his desire."[9] The chief did not differ greatly from his more powerful headmen. A certain amount of ritual in terms of ancestor worship embellished his position, and he had some ascendancy over village headmen to whom he had given land. Yet, in the last analysis, the chief had to rely on his personal following and military power to subjugate headmen who were becoming too powerful. The chief was therefore in direct competition with his subject village headmen, and involved in a constant struggle with them for followers. MacDonald describes how the chief himself was a

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[7] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 133.
[8] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 157.
[9] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 133.

village headman and had to administer his slaves and relatives 175
in his village in the same way as a village headman.[7] MacDonald 578
shrewdly observes: 622
643

> Where the chief sees occasion to interfere with his subordinates he generally consults his own interest. He will say to a headman, "I see that you have been behaving badly to that subject of yours. You cannot get on with him: he must leave you and come and dwell in my own village." The chief thus secures another servant.[8]

Another writer observed, 'As a chief's power consists of the 175
number of his subjects the loss of a man is a serious matter.'[9]
A village headman also tried to strengthen his position against 622
the chief and against other village headmen by attracting to him- 643
self as many followers and dependants as he could. The process 556
whereby a man might increase his status is described as follows: 567

> However large the settlement may become, the man that is first in the field is the chief or headman. In course of time he adorns his position by acquiring wealth. He may shoot some buck and get possession of their skins. With these he goes to the Mangoni country and buys slaves. An old person he obtains for a single skin, but a young slave costs two, and women cost much more than men. The female slaves thus bought are his junior wives and he keeps them busy in hoeing the farm, and all such female duties. The male slaves he employs in farming, building, making baskets, sewing garments and such masculine pursuits. He keeps all these persons strictly at their duties, and at the same time welcomes an opportunity of selling them at a profit. If his daughters were unmarried, he would give them slave-husbands. The natives aim at 'replenishing the earth and subduing it'. As it is no expense for them to rear families, they are all desirous to have many children.
>
> Besides this increase of the village from the chief's own resources, 175
> there may be an accession of freemen. After the settlement is begun, 622
> a man may come to its founder and say, 'I wish to live with you.' 641
> The village chief gives him permission and calls him 'younger 643
> brother'. The newcomer brings his family, builds a house, and cultivates a farm in the same way as his chief. A freeman may leave his present chief and take up his abode with another, whose subject he becomes. His former chief has no longer any authority over him

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[7] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 172. [8] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 155-6.

[9] Hynde, R. S., 'Among the Machinga People', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, viii (1892), 656-65.

175 whatsoever. But a man often decamps by night taking with him
● 622 many slaves belonging to his fellow-citizens; he then goes to some
influential chief who may be only too glad to give the fugitive ground
641 and to establish him as a sub-chief. Freemen who thus leave are
643 detested by their former chief, who welcomes every opportunity of
shooting or capturing them.[1]

In this way village headmen, by increasing their following, in-
175 creased their power against the chief. MacDonald records:

> 554
> When a person has acquired several villages, he becomes a higher
> 622 headman, intermediate between the chief and the owner of a single
> 643 village. Each headman lives in the village he likes best, and leaves
> his 'brothers' to manage his other villages. But a headman of great
> 668 ambition often places his 'brothers' all around him, decides their
> cases, and practically governs a small kingdom of his own. If he lives far from his chief, one might suppose that he was quite independent. When a quarrel arises between the chief of the country and an important headman, the latter may rebel, and found a new kingdom, thus depriving the old chief perhaps of one-third of the villages in his dominion.[2]

MacDonald cites the case of Mkanda of Chiradzulu, who was at first a headman of KuMpama's but rebelled, and went to live on the southern side of the mountain.[3] He also observes that on the other hand, 'a headman may keep up his chief's authority in a district that the latter could not otherwise hold'.[4] Elsewhere he says:

> In and around his own village the chief of the country is a terrible power, and his government is supported by the most prompt and severe punishments. But in distant parts of his dominions, where influential headmen live, he may be little known, although as a matter of theory he is supposed to settle all graver disputes even in remote villages.[5]

175 The history of the Yao chieftaincies in MacDonald's time, and
643 as told to me by my informants, is that of constant division into
independent chiefdoms. In the Zulu and Bemba polities a
strong state structure included a pattern of civil war and the main-

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[1] MacDonald, *Africana*, i, 147-8.
[2] MacDonald, *Africana*, i, 32.
[3] MacDonald, *Africana*, i, 157.
[4] MacDonald, *Africana*, i, 156-7.
[5] MacDonald, *Africana*, i, 154-5.

tenance of the whole state under a new king,[1] but the Yao 175
political units seem to have split into two factions when divisions 643
appeared within them. The dissident faction left the parent chiefdom and established itself somewhere else as an independent entity.

The picture my informants have given me substantiates Mac- 175
Donald's account, though his contact was mainly with Mangoche 439
and not with Machinga Yao. My informants, however, placed 434
greater emphasis than he did upon the importance of trade with 567
the coast. A slave-trading trip was not a venture which the 622
ordinary village headman could undertake with equanimity. 643
The journey to the coast, to Quilimane or to Kilwa, was long and arduous, and strong military protection against bandits was needed. A caravan could only be sent by a chief or someone of like status, so that the coastal trade became the monopoly of the chiefs. Headmen who had ivory and slaves to send to the coast included them in the chief's caravan. When it returned, the headmen were able to collect calico and beads to the value of their contribution. Gun-powder also seems to have been a chief's monopoly. Thus, in fact, he did have some physical control over the military activities of his subject village headmen, since he could withhold supplies of gun-powder if he wished. But in a society where minor chieftains were inimically poised against each other, the maxim 'a chief without people is nothing' had much more significance than it has to-day: a village headman's ultimate sanction was that he could withdraw his support from one chief and give it to another.

THE EFFECTS OF WHITE CONQUEST

It was into a society thus organized that the first Missionaries 175
came. I have already described how the Missionaries, by taking 643
in runaway slaves, and by occasional armed combat, entered 648
into political relationships with the chiefs. With the establishment of the Protectorate, the policy, clearly expressed in Sir Harry Johnston's letter,[2] was to stamp out slavery. This was done in numerous campaigns against the Yao chiefs[3] so that by

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[1] See Gluckman, M., 'Succession and Civil War among the Bemba: An Exercise in Anthropological Theory', *Human Problems*, xvi (1954), 6-25.

[2] See f.n., p. 29.

[3] See Chap. II, pp. 29-30.

175 621 698 Under this Ordinance, the Administration provided first of all for the formation of 'villages'. A Rule made under Section 3 of the Ordinance and published in Gazette Notice No. 113 of 1913, gave the Resident the power to concentrate the native population, where necessary, into organised villages of not less than 20 huts and to disallow the erection of isolated huts. 'In order to give effect to this policy the erection of new huts was to be confined to existing villages, and the occupants of isolated huts were to be instructed to remove, as opportunity offered, to an approved village.'[1]

175 622 698 The Ordinance then proceeded to create a line of authority from the District Resident to the villagers through Village Headmen and Principal Headmen. Districts in the charge of Residents were divided into Administrative Sections. A Principal Headman was put in charge of each. The Sections in turn were sub-divided into Village areas (groups of villages), each in the charge of a Village Headman.

Under the Ordinance, Principal Headmen and Village Headmen were given specific duties and responsibilities in their respective areas. The Principal Headman, for example, was:

> to be responsible for the good order of his Administrative Section, the maintenance of discipline, the reporting of crime and the apprehension of criminals, sanitation, the control of the movement of cattle, reporting outbreaks of epidemic disease, and for any other matters in the interest of law and order and the general welfare of the native community.[2]

The Principal Headman was also to 'secure the attendance at the Magistrate's court of natives whose presence was required in connection with deceased estates, remittances, government labour and so on, and to exert his influence to accelerate the payment of hut and poll taxes'. These duties in turn devolved upon Village Headmen—they were responsible for their smaller areas as the Principal Headmen were responsible for the larger.

Unfortunately we have no information about the way in which Principal and Village Headmen were chosen. Murray records that

> Residents were not necessarily to recommend those natives who had hitherto been recognized as Chiefs or Headmen. It was considered

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[1] Murray, *Handbook*, 132.

[2] Murray, *Handbook*, 130.

that in some cases the previous records or age of such persons would be found to be such as to preclude their selection to transact the responsible duties of Headmen under the Ordinance, and in such circumstances Residents were to consider the claims of other natives of good standing, intelligence and reputation residing in the section, who, having assisted the Resident in native administrative matters in the past, might be expected to carry out the duties efficiently, and who, at the same time, were known to enjoy the confidence of the natives with whose supervision they were entrusted.'[1] 175 622 618

Elsewhere Murray writes, 'The system introduced by the Ordinance was in no way intended to revivify or perpetuate government by native chiefs. The position of Principal Headmen under the Ordinance was in no sense to be similar to the archaic one of the chief.'[2] Yet in the area in which I worked it was precisely the traditional chiefs who were made Principal Headmen—Jalasi, Nyambi, Kawinga, Liwonde and Malemia. In retrospect it is difficult to see how it could have been otherwise. Considering the sentiment attached to the chief in Yao society, it seems scarcely possible to conceive of leaders who 'enjoyed the confidence of the natives with whose supervision they were entrusted' who were not chiefs in the traditional sense.

In spite of its avowed intentions not to 'revivify or perpetuate government by native chiefs', the Administration proceeded to invest the traditional chiefs with its own power. 'Residents', Murray writes, 'were to indicate carefully by their attitude towards and dealings with Principal Headmen the fact that they were officially recognized as chiefs of their respective sections and that, as such, they were entitled to the respect and obedience of their people.'[3] 175 622 643 618

It would be wrong to imagine that the military actions at the end of the last century had completely destroyed chieftainship. Those who had resisted the Whites were driven out of British Territory but were allowed to return very soon afterwards. These chiefs then took up the threads of their life as best they could under the changed conditions. The degree to which the new Administration had become a force in Yao politics is illustrated by an entry in the District Book in Zomba. Kawinga III had died in August 1905, and the record reads: 'There were two

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[1] Murray, *Handbook*, 131.

[2] Murray, *Handbook*, 130.

[3] Murray, *Handbook*, 130.

175 claimants to the succession, Kumtumba and Chiwalo. Their
623 claims were really very equal and His Majesty's Commissioner (April 1908) called in Kumtumba and the most important
643 headmen and decided the succession by their vote.' District
648 Books have many entries dating before 1912 showing that the Administration did not consider chiefs and village headmen insignificant.

The appointment of village headmen needed the approval of the Provincial Commissioner, but presumably the recommendation came from the District Resident. It is reasonable to suppose that the District Resident in turn had discussed appointments with the principal headmen. Whatever the mechanics of the appointment, however, the outcome was that most village headmen who held positions of prestige in the indigenous system of ranking became village headmen under the Ordinance.

The District Administration (Natives) Ordinance thus made official the unofficial relationship which had previously existed between the Administration and the chiefs and the village headmen. The traditional relationship of chief to village headman and village headman to villager, however, became suffused with a new significance. These relationships had become part and parcel of the extensive administrative organization of the British Empire.

THE MODERN ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE[1]

648 The Native Authority Ordinance of 1933 and the Native Court's Ordinance provide the legislative framework for the
692 modern administrative system. Under Section 23(c) of the
643 Native Authority Ordinance, the rules, orders, proclamations, notices and appointments made under the District Administration (Natives) Ordinance were not repealed. The duties which had so long been incumbent upon chiefs and village headmen, therefore, continued unaffected.

The chief, however, was set up at the centre of a bureaucracy and given autonomy in a number of directions. The Native Court's Ordinance gave him legal powers to inflict punishment on his subjects; the treasury under his authority could raise

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[1] I have dealt in some detail with the position of the chief in the modern situation in my article 'Political Organization of the Yao of Southern Nyasaland'.

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761 crop failures. Also I was told that important village headmen
[764] are buried with their heads pointing to the east.

The Yao concept of the past is reflected in the principles of
173 political organization of these Machinga chiefdoms. The in-
554 vasion is the datum point from which rank mainly stems. We
622 may classify modern headmen into: those who were in the area before the Yao invasion, i.e. the *Aborigines*; the *Invaders*; and those who have come in since the invasion and have had to submit themselves to the Machinga chief, i.e. the *Newcomers*. The principle behind this classification of headmen is fundamental to Yao political structure. Stated most simply it is the rule that MacDonald quoted in describing the development of local organization: '*However large the settlement may become the man that is first in is the chief or headman*.'[1] This is, of course, somewhat of a simplification, but the rule contains the essence of the principle. It was reversed for the Aboriginal Nyanja because the Yao subjugated them. But the claims of the Nyanja chiefs to rank because they had occupied the land first were recognized by the Yao who absorbed them into the social structure in positions of high rank.

425 But the principle holds among the Yao themselves, and for
591 the Ngoni in their movements after the White conquest. The
622 operation of the principle is clearest in the structure of small local areas such as Chiwalo's. When Chiwalo's area was first settled, just after World War I, there were large tracts of unoccupied land. The first headmen to move into this region were Cigwaja, Kapalasa, Nyanje, Makata and Mumbwa. The local chief Chiwalo followed Cigwaja, but as Cigwaja was one of the Invader headmen under Chiwalo during the period of invasion, he now recognized Chiwalo as the chief. The area that is now Chiwalo's chiefdom was divided out among these five headmen. As other headmen came into the area they had to approach one of these five for land rights. These, when granted, were granted irrevocably in a block to the new village headman who then had sole rights to distribute the land afterwards. If he had the land to spare, he may have granted a portion of it to yet another village headman, and this action was also irrevocable. The land occupation pattern in any particular area is therefore extremely complex, because in addition to the village garden areas, indivi-

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[1] MacDonald, *Africana*, i, 147. See p. 33 above.

dents may hold garden plots in other village areas which they 425
have temporarily borrowed in a private arrangement with the 554
individual owner. But when the system is seen in relation to
the pattern of occupation of the area, it is greatly simplified. 622
Each garden may be traced back to the original owner through three or four village headmen. The pattern of the reversion of rights follows the same system. The garden land of a village which has recently moved in and is moving out again reverts directly to the village headman who granted it. If he has moved out it reverts back to the village headman from whom it was in turn acquired.[1] These original landholders form the central points of locally organized areas to-day. For example, in Chiwalo's area there is Chiwalo at the top of the scale, then there are Kapalamu, Cigwaja, Mombwa, Makata and Nyanje as the most important village headmen, and they take precedence over any of the other village headmen. All the others who have come into the area since then, of whom many are Nguru, rank very much lower.

From the smallest village to the chiefdom as a whole, therefore, 554
there is a series of overlapping areas of organization. In any 622
particular area chosen at random in a chiefdom as large as, say, 631
Kawinga's, there will probably be two or three small villages which recognize the primacy of one of their number. The headman of this village may be called in to arbitrate in disputes over land or personal quarrels or even in the private consultations held after the death of a village member (*mapeto*). But the superior headman in turn recognizes *his* superior who was in the area before him. This system is extended over larger and larger areas, each headman in turn recognizing some other headman who was in the area before him, until ultimately the primacy of the Invader chief over all his headmen is established by the same principle. There is no clear-cut district organization as among the Zulu and Bemba.[2]

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[1] See also "Preliminary Notes on Land Tenure and Agriculture among the Machinga Yao", *Human Problems*, x (1950), 1–23. This system of land-holding has been called "estates of holding" by Gluckman. See his *Essays on Lozi Land and Royal Property*, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper, No. 10 (Livingstone, 1943), p. 29 ff.

[2] See the essays by Gluckman and Richards in Fortes, M., and Evans-Pritchard, E. E., *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press for the International African Institute (London, 1940).

554 These headmen who are the centres of local social structure
are the higher headmen that MacDonald mentions.[1] Many of
622 them to-day are the descendants of the traditional councillors
692 (*ndona*) who were sent out to the extremities of the chiefdoms
to be the outer governors in these areas.[2] Their villages are
social centres in that many disputes are taken to these important
headmen before they are taken to the Native Authority's court.
For example, the dispute between the women of Nampeya and
Cikowita was taken to Ntibwilibwi.[3] The chief usually orders
headmen to assemble at the villages of important headmen when
he has directions to issue to them. Very frequently the Administrative
officers camp there for the night on their tours and call
554 the headmen in to them for conference. The placing of mosques
at the villages of these important headmen also indicates their
622 significance as social centres. Most Moslem villages have small
346 mosques which the more devout use for the morning and evening
prayers during Ramadan only. At the villages of important
headmen larger mosques have been built and these are used for
the midday prayers on Fridays (*juma*), when most of the Moslems
in each area assemble in their best clothes for communal prayers.
Large brick mosques have been built at the court villages of
Jalasi, Liwonde and Kawinga. There are other large mosques
at the villages of chieftains such as Chiwalo, Chamba, Mposa,
and of important headmen such as Kangomba, Nyenje and many
others. These chiefs and headmen were all Invaders and are, as
I shall show later, almost by definition Moslems. They are also
headmen of high rank so that the placing of the mosque, and the
other features of local social structure, are largely derivatives of
the system of ranking.

Rank therefore underlies the structure of local areas as well as
554 the structure of the chiefdoms as wholes. It is, as I show later,
622 closely associated with the historical origin of the headmen.
Yet the correlation is not perfect and I shall show that other
factors tend to militate against the fixed historical ranking of
headmen. Nevertheless, the principle of primacy is the most
important single factor.

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[1] See Chap. II, p. 36.

[2] See Chap. IV, pp. 92-3.

[3] See Chap. V, p. 130.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THREE CATEGORIES OF HEADMEN

In Table V I have set out the ethnic affiliation of the headmen in the three categories and also the dates of arrival of Newcomers in the Kawinga-Liwonde area. This table shows that

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TABLE V

NUMBERS OF VILLAGE HEADMEN WHO ARE ABORIGINES, INVADERS AND NEWCOMERS

Tribes	Aborigines	Invaders*	Newcomers							Total
			Pre-White	White Conquest (1891–1907)	1908–17	1918–27	1928–37	1938–47	Unrecorded	
Yao . . .	—	144	19	60	20	14	13	13	33	316
Mpotola . .	—	53	—	43	21	9	1	1	—	128
Nguru . .	—	5	2	48	58	40	27	14	17	218
Nyanja . .	25	3	1	4	6	5	1	4	1	48
Unrecorded .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	6
Total . . .	25	205	22	155	105	73	42	32	57	716

* In Ngokwe area, 30 villages are classified as Invaders who came into Nyasaland as refugees from the Portuguese military actions at the close of the nineteenth century.

easily the great majority of villages has come into the area since the White conquest. On the other hand, only 3·5 per cent are Aborigines. Just over a quarter (28·6 per cent) are direct descendants of the original Invaders or headmen of villages which have branched off from these. The remainder (67·9 per cent) are the Newcomers who have submitted themselves to the Invaders. Far more Newcomers came in during the decade following the White conquest than in any of the more recent decades.[1] We cannot argue directly from these figures that the greatest influx of Newcomers into Nyasaland took place before World War I. Newcomers in the more recent decades may be as numerous but may be passing out of the area more quickly, and therefore are not recorded in my survey. On the other

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[1] Nguru immigration in 1908–27 was due to exceptional causes.

622 hand, all villages tend to disappear in time. We should there-
563 fore expect more of the headmen who came in during the
167 earlier decades to be forgotten, and the trend should be more pronounced than it is. In fact we know from other sources that immigration of the Nguru, who represent about one-half of the Newcomers, was greatest before 1930, and it is almost certain that the figures do reflect the change in the amount of Nguru immigration, and that the factors which may operate against the trend are not important. As a whole the set of figures suggests that immigration is slowly coming to an end.

622 The Aborigines are all Nyanja. Among the Invaders, 70·2 per
563 cent are Yao, 25·9 per cent are Mpotola, and the remainder 3·9 per cent are Nyanja and Nguru. The Mpotola Invaders are practically all in the Ngokwe and Chikweo areas, so that in the other areas (i.e. in Liwonde, Kawinga, Chamba and Mponda) the Yao represent 94·9 per cent of the Invaders; the remainder are Mpotola. Under Ngokwe and Chikweo who are Mpotola chieftains, 54·5 per cent (48 of 88) of the Invaders are Mpotola, and 37·5 per cent are Yao, and the remaining 8·0 per cent are Nyanja and Nguru. Among the 486 Newcomers, 35·8 per cent of the headmen are Yao, 15·4 per cent Mpotola, 43·8 per cent Nguru and 4·9 per cent are mainly Nyanja. In general, therefore, we may say that the Aborigines are all Nyanja; the Invaders are Yao in the major area and Mpotola in the other area; and the Newcomers are predominantly Nguru from Portuguese East Africa, though there is a fair proportion of Yao who have come from other Nyasaland districts.

There are significant differences among the three categories of
622 headmen in their religious affiliations. In general there are more
795 Moslems (71·8 per cent) among all headmen than Christians or
787 Pagans. But there are more Moslems among the Invaders than among either the Aborigines or the Newcomers.[1] There are more Pagans among the Newcomers, but the proportion of Christians among the Aborigines and the Newcomers is about equal (25·0 per cent and 21·9 per cent). These differences in religious affiliations are consistent with the different historical backgrounds of the two groups. The Invaders are the descendants of the Yao slavers, who in the past had been in intimate

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[1] Invaders = 91·1 per cent; Others = 63·9 per cent; Diff. of per cent = 27·2; S.E. of diff. = 3·7; C.R. = 7·2; $p < 0·0001$.

TABLE VI

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF ABORIGINES, INVADERS AND NEWCOMER HEADMEN

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[illegible]

Religious Affiliation	Numbers			Total	Percentages			Total
	Aborigines	Invaders	Newcomers		Aborigines	Invaders	Newcomers	
Moslem . .	17	182	296	495	70·8	90·1	63·5	71·5
Pagan . .	1	6	68	75	4·2	3·0	14·6	10·8
Church of Scotland .	3	10	59	72	12·5	5·0	12·7	10·4
Roman Catholic .	2	1	33	36	8·3	0·5	7·1	5·2
Other Christians .	1	3	10	14	4·2	1·5	2·1	2·0
Total . .	24	202	466	692	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0
Unknown .	1	3	20	24				
	25	205	486	716				

Combining Roman Catholic and other Christian totals.
$n = 8$; $\chi^2 = 56{\cdot}48$; $p < 0{\cdot}00001$.

contact with the Arab slave-traders and had taken over Islam from them. To-day the chiefs are still frequently called 'sultan'. All the chiefs in the Machinga area are Moslems except possibly the Malemia who was installed in 1947. He was brought up as a Christian but the strong Islamic tradition behind his status is reflected in the star and crescent on his ceremonial headdress. The Nyanja, however, were influenced by the Missions from the start and the Nguru were not as directly concerned in the slave-trade and were therefore less affected by Islam. They have been easily converted to Christianity. Among them too there are more Pagans. The difference in religion here is largely a reflex of the political relationships of the headmen. In other words, the Yao stoutly maintain that they are Moslems merely because Islam is one of the distinguishing marks of the Yao and of the Invaders in particular. It would be difficult for some of them to maintain their point in face of strict Moslems, for many of

632 them follow the tenets of Islam in only the most cursory way.
795 An Nguru therefore admits to being a Pagan more readily than
787 a Yao, because he cannot identify himself with the Invading group.

Kinship with the Chief

602, The most important way in which the three categories differ,
693 however, is in the degree to which they are associated with the chief. While the Invaders are identified with the chief because of their association with him in the invasion, they are also tied to him to a greater degree by various kinship links than the other categories of headmen.

Although the exact composition of the Invading groups will never be known, it appears from the accounts of old men, that the groups were made up primarily of the chief and his younger brothers, together with their sons and slaves, and some unrelated followers. Other chieftaincies and village headmen have sprung from the chief's lineage. For example, Kawinga was the leader who brought the present Kawinga-Liwonde group into Nyasaland. The first man to be called Kawinga left the Lujenda River where he was living with an elder relative called Nsanama, whose exact genealogical connection I have never been able to determine. Accompanying them was *Liwonde*, a younger brother of Kawinga. As they passed through the country just west of Lake Chiuta they encountered the Mpotola under Chikweu, and these joined up with Kawinga and his relatives and went to Kongwe on the west side of Lake Malombe (in the present Kalembo's area). From this place they were displaced by the Ngoni and returned east and south to the Chikala Range where they displaced Malemia and occupied the heights. Subsequently, Liwonde left the mountain and went to live on the Shire River where the old Government station used to be. From this point on, Kawinga and Liwonde seem to have acted almost independently. Nsanama seems to have stayed with Kawinga. Chamba who was the son of the first Kawinga now set himself up as a chief on the south side of Chikala and Chaoni. Mposa, the son of the first Liwonde, moved to the shores of Lake Shirwa and set himself up there. Chiwalo, a sister's daughter's son of the first Kawinga, set himself up on the northern fringe of the area. Recently Stora, a sister's daughter's daughter's

daughter's son of the first Kawinga, has been recognized as a 622
subordinate Native Authority. Village headmen also develop in 643
the same way from the relatives of the chief. Among the 205 village headmen who are of Invader stock, there are 62 who are

TABLE VII

PROPORTIONS OF RELATED AND UNRELATED HEADMEN AMONG THE INVADERS

Chief's Relatives						Non-Relatives	Total
Direct			Clan				
Mat.*	Pat.	Aff.	Mat.†	Pat.	Aff.		
17 8·3	35 17·1	10 4·9	37 18·0	22 10·7	12 5·9	72 35·1	205 100%
30·3%			34·6%			35·1%	

* Includes the six chiefs themselves.

† Those who have the same clan-name.

Mat. = Matrilineally related; Pat. = Patrilaterally related; Aff. = Affinally related.

either chiefs, their direct matrilineal relatives or their direct patrilateral relatives. This represents 30·3 per cent of the total. Of these 35 or 17·1 per cent are patrilateral relatives.

The chief's sons occupied a very strong position in the early 622
Yao chiefdoms. Most sons of the early chiefs were their children 643
by slave-wives. Since there was no one on their mother's side 644
from whom they could inherit rank, it follows that they could only expect to achieve status through their father, the chief. Yet they were not, as his younger brothers and his sisters' sons were, a danger to him, because they were not in the line of succession and had no reason to wish his death. On the contrary, the bonds that unite father and son in Yao society are strong but not formal. The chief's sons, the *acibwana*, therefore came to occupy some of the most trusted positions under him. They became his military leaders; they led his caravans to the coast and back; they were the messengers who represented him to foreign chiefdoms and to the Whites when they came. In these positions the chief could trust his sons, because he knew that they

622 643 644 had no hostile axes to grind. Younger brothers and sisters' sons might have used the military forces against him, or they might have squandered the wealth of the caravans because they had a jural right to it. As the sons grew older they were given groups of slaves and slave-wives to look after, and so they became village headmen under the chief. Many of them came to have initiation rights and hold other positions of importance.

622 643 602 601 The chief was also connected to other Invader headmen through marriage. It is clear that affinal links become in time cognatic, but the marriage of the chief with a headman's sister fixes the relationship between that headman and the chief in perpetuity. The succeeding chief does not look upon the village headman who is his mother's brother's wife's brother as a father-in-law, as he would if he were a commoner, but instead calls him 'brother-in-law'. Also, all the successors of the village headman call all the succeeding chiefs by this term, so that the political structure of the area becomes phrased in a kinship idiom: the quasi-kinship of headman and chief in this context becomes suffused with political meaning. The number of village headmen who claim some affinal relationship to the chief is not great—only 10 of the total of 205 (i.e. 4·9 per cent).

TABLE VIII

622 643 602 PROPORTIONS OF RELATED AND UNRELATED HEADMEN AMONG THE NEWCOMERS

Chief's Relatives						Non-Relatives	Total
Direct			Clan				
Mat.	Pat.	Aff.	Mat.	Pat.	Aff.		
0 0	13 3·4	15 3·9	24 6·3	13 3·4	16 4·2	300 78·8	381 100%
7·3%			13·9%			78·8%	

Among the Aborigines and Newcomers, naturally, there are very few direct relatives. There are, of course, no matrilineal relatives. The patrilateral relatives amongst the Newcomers (3·4 per cent) are those of Kawinga who have moved into Chamba and Liwonde areas. There have been various marriages between the chiefs and Newcomers and as a result there are 37 per cent of the Newcomer headmen who are linked affinally to the chiefs. The proportion of affinally-linked headmen in the two categories is approximately the same. The major differences are among the proportions of headmen linked by matrilineal and patrilateral ties to the chief. (622 (643) (624

CLANSHIP WITH THE CHIEF

A more numerous category is those who are related to the chief, not by common descent but by clanship. (622 643)

Informants tell me that before the Whites came to Nyasaland, each person took the clan-name of his mother. People who had the same clan-name were said to be 'of one kind' (*lukosyo lumo*). The word *lukosyo* had no other meaning but 'kind' or 'sort', and the word *mtundu* is frequently used as a synonym. If a man is asked his *lukosyo*, he is as likely as not to give the reply 'Yao' or 'Machinga', i.e. his tribal origin. By extension it follows that if two people have the same clan-name inherited from their mothers, and their mothers in turn have inherited it from their mothers, and so on, eventually there must be a common ancestress. The two people therefore call each other 'brother'. However, among the Yao there are no stories of the origin of clans and only vague traditions of a common clan ancestress. I often questioned Yao about their clan-names and joked with them that though they were invaders they shared the same clan-names as their subjects. The clan-names I found among the Machinga Yao were *apiri*, *amilasi*, *ambewe*, *abanda*, *asimbiri*, *amwale*, *angoma*, and these clan-names also appear among the Maraŵi group of tribes (Cewa, Maŋanja, Cipeta, Mbo, etc.), the Lakeside Tonga of Chinteche district, and the Mpotola and Lomwe or Nguru from Portuguese East Africa. The Achisi Yao under Katuli, a group related to the Mataka Yao from Portuguese East Africa, do not have these clan-names, nor, as far as I know do the Yao in Tanganyika. Clan-names, therefore, may be a feature of the Machinga Yao in Nyasaland, acquired as a result of their contact with the Maraŵi and other indigenous peoples of that country. It is significant that the clan-names are not as a rule common Yao words for everyday objects in the same way that clan-names amongst, say, the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia, are names of plants, animals and other natural phenomena. The word (624 [60]

632 *amilasi* is used for bamboos and once an informant when pressed
643 told me a tale of a group of people who in dire starvation ate
614 bamboo leaves and were thenceforth called after the bamboo.
This story, however, was discredited by others and I pass it off
as unimportant. There is, however, some evidence that the
words *apiti amilasi*, *ambewe* and so on, are commonly used in
Nyanja and possibly amongst the Lakeside Tonga who were once
part of the *Maravi* peoples, for objects other than clan-names.

614 Informants say that people with the same clan-name could not
582 marry in the past,[1] so that the clan appears to have had the
characteristics of an exogamous descent group. The position
to-day is vastly different. Not only do people take the clan-
names of their fathers, but many young people do not even
know their clan-names at all.

614 At this point I should make it clear that the modern confusion
611 about clan-names is no doubt partly due to the emphasis placed
587 on patrilineal descent by the purveyors of White culture, the
Administrators and the Missionaries, and also by the same
emphasis in Islamic tradition which has influenced most Yao
groups. Another factor in the situation is that slave descent still
markedly affects social relationships in modern Nyasaland. Its
significance here is that when a man took a slave-wife in the old
days, his children by her took his clan-name, and not hers.
Patrilineal descent of the clan-name therefore tends to point to
the slave origin of a person. People who are able to point to
a freeman ancestry are proud of this fact and are proud to be
able to claim a clan-name associated with a long line of matri-
lineal ancestors, particularly if there were some well-known men
among them. On the other hand, I found it a fairly safe indica-
tion that, if I could find no information about an ancestress,
particularly her clan-name, then I was dealing with a group
descended from a slave. A third factor is that some people
614 explained their lack of knowledge of a clan-name by the state
611 of social unrest and confusion at the end of the last century.
As a result of the incursions of the Ngoni, Nguru and slave-
raiding Yao and Arab groups, and finally the punitive expeditions
of the British and the Portuguese, villages were destroyed and
groups annihilated. People lost contact with their relatives, even

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[1] Confirmed by Hynde, R. S., 'Marriage and relationship among the Yao', *Nyasa News*, vii (1895), 217-18.

their parents. Therefore many people who were children then, but adults to-day, say that their parents were "just running from the wars" and that they were never told their clan-names. 621 611

Whatever are the factors which have led to the comparative lack of importance of the clan-name in the social relationships of commoners to-day, the clan-name has preserved its significance in the political structure. I have already said that the clan-names associated with particular village headmanships and chieftaincies are well remembered, and this fact is not without significance. It seems likely that the clan-name was used in earlier times by groups as a method of claiming protection. The same set of clan-names appears throughout the tribes which surround the Machinga Yao. It seems likely that the adoption of clan-names facilitated their incursion into the country, and it is certain that insurgent Yao groups have used the clan-name as excuses to move into an area, and gradually to extend their dominance over it. 614 622 643

For example, in Malemia's area there is an Nyanja village headman called Nyani, who has the clan-name *mwale*. Stannus reports that when Malemia moved into this area he claimed brotherhood with Nyani because of the clan-name, and was able to obtain from him the land extending from the Likwenu River to the Namadzi River, a district 30 to 40 miles long.[1] Again when Kawinga fled from Chikala after the British raids on it, he went to the land of Nkanyela, an Mpotola chief in Portuguese East Africa, who is also an *ambewe*. That the clan-name is used essentially in this political field is illustrated by the relationships of Mposa to Mbande. Mposa, the son of Kawinga I, settled in the country of the Nyanja chief Mbande, who had the same clan-name as Mposa, viz. *amilasi*. Mposa calls Mbande 'brother' to-day and Mbande holds a position of honour and rank in Mposa's chiefdom. It is significant that other village headmen such as Cilombo, Mbalika and Mkwinda also have the same clan-name, but they do not claim kinship to Mposa. In modern times, when there is no longer any great danger to be incurred in moving from one part of the country to another, it seems likely that the necessity for some mechanism, whereby the friendship of otherwise hostile groups could be secured, falls away. In other words, the significance of the clan-name is gradually disappearing as its functions atrophy.

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[1] Stannus, 'The Wayao of Nyasaland', 237.

614 601 Relationship may be claimed not only through having the same clan-name, but also by patrilateral and affinal clan ties. For example, one of the early Kawingas is supposed to have married an *abanda* woman. Therefore Chikweta, whose clan-name is *abanda*, calls Kawinga 'brother-in-law' (*alamu*). Some of Kawinga's village headmen also call him brother-in-law because of the clan-name. Ngokwe, whose clan-name is *asimbiti*, had an *amilasi* father, so that many of his *amilasi* headmen call him 'son'.

614 622 643 Here, as before, there are more Invader headmen who claim to be clan relatives of the chief (34·6 per cent) than Newcomer headmen (13·9 per cent) (see Tables VII and VIII). Once again the proportion of headmen who claim affinal links to the chief is approximately the same in the two categories and the main difference is in the proportions who have the same clan-name and who are clan-patrilateral relatives in the way I have explained. I have mentioned that though many headmen have the same clan-names as the chiefs or the clan-names of the chiefs' fathers, they do not all claim to be clan-relatives of the chiefs. There is no reason to suppose that the distribution of clan-members is different between the Invaders and Newcomers, so that it seems likely that more Invaders claim the clan-relationship to the chief when they can, than do Newcomers.

UNRELATED HEADMEN

622 643 The striking difference between the two main groups of headmen is in the proportion not related to the chief. Among the Invaders only 35·1 per cent of the headmen cannot claim some kinship link to the chief. Among the Newcomers, however, roughly double that proportion (78·8 per cent) are in this position. Among the Invaders some of the unrelated headmen hold positions of importance by virtue of their independence of the chief. These are the *ndima* whose functions I describe later.[1] Among the Newcomers, however, there are no *ndima*, so that this difference between the categories is one of the most important.

In Tables VII and VIII I have omitted a total of 105 villages, 93 of which were small villages whose relationship to the chief I did not record. All these villages were settled in distant and inaccessible places and I asked about them from the chiefs and

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[1] Chap. IV, pp. 92-3.

their councillors at the courts. If they were relatives of the chief 622
it is almost certain that he would have mentioned them. We 643
may assume then that the true proportion of unrelated headmen
among the Newcomers is, as we would expect, very much
greater than among the Invaders.

Of the total of 424 Administrative villages there were ten in 622
which I did not record the formal relationship to the chief. In 643
Table IX I set out the proportions in these categories among the
Administrative village headmen, and there is no radical difference 602
between these proportions and those for all village headmen.

TABLE IX

PROPORTIONS OF RELATIVES AND NON-RELATIVES AMONG ADMINISTRATIVE HEADMEN*

	Chief's Relatives						Non-Relatives	Total
	Direct			Clan				
	Mat.	Pat.	Aff.	Mat.	Pat.	Aff.		
Invaders . .	18 (13·2)	23 (16·9)	6 (4·4)	24 (17·6)	11 (8·1)	9 (6·6)	45 (33·1)	136 (99·9%)
Newcomers .	0 (0·0)	9 (3·5)	12 (4·7)	20 (7·8)	11 (4·3)	12 (4·7)	193 (75·1)	257† (100·1%)
Total . .	18	32	18	44	22	21	238	393

$n = 6$; $\chi^2 = 90\cdot 3$; $p = 0\cdot 0001$.

* This table excludes the 21 Aborigines.

† Excludes 10 villages for which I have not recorded this information.

To summarize, we may characterize the Invaders as Yao, 622
Moslems, and associates of their chiefs by historical connections 643
and kinship ties. The Newcomers and the Aborigines on the 602
other hand are of different tribes. They have more diverse 563
religions, are not connected to the chiefs by kinship ties as closely 554
as the Invaders are, and do not share with them the strong
bond of being co-Invaders. It is in the struggle for prestige
and rank that these bonds with the chiefs assume significance.

CHAPTER IV

PRESTIGE AND RANK AMONG THE VILLAGE HEADMEN

The Political Process as the Struggle of Headmen for Rank

● 622 554 THUS far I have been describing the composition of the three categories of headmen: the Aborigines, the Invaders and the Newcomers. This classification is fundamental to the system of ranking among them, and is the most important single factor. But rank among village headmen is determined by other factors as well. We may summarize the most important of these thus:

A. *Rank from association with the chief.*
   1. Accompanied the chief during the Invasion.
   2. Kinship with the chief.

B. *Rank from opposition to the chief.*
   1. Prestige from another area.
   2. Large following.

The struggle of the headmen for power and prestige, both among themselves and against the chief, constitutes the political process. This is expressed mainly in the competition for various symbols of prestige. In this process, village headmen may use whatever connection with the chief they can, in order to gain his favour. They may use their direct kinship or clanship with him, or some more nebulous connection, such as the friendship of their fathers with him, or they may play upon the history of the association of their village with his ancestors in the invasion of the country. If they cannot exploit some link with the chief in their struggle for prestige, they may press their claims on the basis that their villages are large, and that if they are frustrated they may move their allegiance to another chief.

The historical fact of being of Invader stock is clearly a major determinant of rank. Invaders always have the advantage over the Newcomers because of their historical association with the chief. They are more closely bound to him: they participate

in the ritual of the chieftaincy more than Newcomers do; pro- 622
vide the chief's councillors; pay rain-levies and in other ways
express their closer tie with him. But there is no rigid class 554
structure based on tradition. All villages are liable to break up. If for any reason the village's internal cohesion begins to weaken, its members scatter and it disappears as a political entity. Invader as well as Newcomer villages may thus disintegrate. The smaller sections of an Invader village which now set up villages of their own have to compete with the larger and more united villages of Newcomer origin. Another facet of the political process, therefore, is the continual competition of village headmen who are trying to maintain the unity of the villages under them, and to increase their following, so that their status against the chief and the other village headmen may be enhanced.

Marks of Rank

In the vernacular it is the *name* of the village which is said to 103
be important.[1] This name is usually taken from the founder of 622
the village and is assumed by a new village headman when he
succeeds to the position: when a new village is founded the 554
headman gives it his name to distinguish it from the parent village. But the importance that is ascribed to a name is clearly the importance of the corporate group which it represents. The headman is an incumbent of a social status, the prestige of which is drawn from the corporate group which he represents in his public dealings.

The prestige of village headmen is shown particularly in the 554
degree of deference accorded to them by other village headmen.
The headman with the highest prestige is of course the chief: 622
the original leader of the Invaders. Below him may be ranked 643
the rest of the village headmen in a relatively fixed pyramidal hierarchy, determined by a number of factors which I shall outline later.

The dress of important headmen is often an indicator of prestige 292
but this criterion is not infallible nowadays when labour migrants, 554
craftsmen and tobacco growers can afford to buy better clothes 622
than many headmen. But it is usually a fairly safe guess that when a man carries a long stick and is dressed in long flowing

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[1] *Lina lya kulungwa*—lit. 'the name is great'.

● 622 robes (a gown not unlike a woman's dressing-gown), wears a bright-coloured turban, and has one or two men walking behind
554 him, he is a rather important village headman. One particular
292 item of clothing in the Kawinga, Liwonde and Nyambi areas, is the scarlet headband which some village headmen may wear. I shall discuss this later in the context of the competition of village headmen for rank.

Another external characteristic of rank, which seems to have
622 disappeared with the changing economic structure of Nyasaland,
554 was the carrying of knives (*nsinjo*) by important village headmen.
411 Previously, status was indicated by the type and size of knife carried in public. The chief usually carried the largest and most ornate. The knife taken from Kawinga on his surrender in Portuguese East Africa was about 18 inches long and had a decorated ivory handle. Smaller knives of similar pattern belonged to his headmen.[1] Nowadays, many young commoners carry knives two or even three feet long, made from the broken blades of motor-car springs.

The right of important village headmen to build fences [2] at
622 the back of their huts is also a mark of prestige which seems to
554 have lost its significance. About 50 years ago only important
351 headmen had the right to erect a fence at the back of their huts.
[567] This fence, made of tall grass about six feet high, enclosed the grain stores and other food supplies of the household and formed a private compound in which the headman's wife and slaves carried on their daily tasks.[3] It seems likely that private compounds and slavery were positively associated, so that only the important village headmen who had many slaves found it necessary to build fences. All chiefs and most important head-
[881] men to-day still erect these fences. Those who hold initiation rights are obliged to build them because, when the initiands return from the seclusion phase of the initiation ceremony, they are supposed to spend one night in the headman's private compound before going back to their villages. But nowadays, minor village headmen and commoners also frequently build these

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[1] See f.n. 4, Chap. II, p. 38.

[2] *Lusenje*, pl. *ndenje*. The enclosed space or 'compound' is *cimbundi*. Typical hut compounds are depicted on Plate IX (*a*) and (*b*), facing p. 206.

[3] MacDonald suggests that the common term *kwayeto* for woman is derived from the adverb *kwayeto*—on the other side (of the fence).

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compounds, especially in areas where there are man-eating lions,[1] 554
so that it is no longer an infallible indicator of the hut-owner's 351
rank.

Minor village headmen always allow their superiors to sit on 622
a chair. If village headmen of commensurate status are present, 554
chairs may be sought for them all. But a minor village headman 576
never occupies a chair, even if one is available, in the presence of his superior. At a meeting, for example, a chief occupies a chair and so may his most important *nduna* or councillor. The more important headmen sit alone on separate mats, for a man only shares a mat with his equals, and then only rarely. Junior headmen, however many there are, have to try to squeeze themselves on to one mat or squat on the ground.

Important headmen also have the right of walking in front of their juniors. If there are three or four headmen returning from, say, a court case, they arrange themselves in the pathway in an order which reflects their rank. As they file down the narrow field paths the leader is the most senior among the group. After him come the other headmen and last of all the commoners. This order of precedence is also followed when initiands pass through the tribal initiation ceremonies. The sisters' sons and other matrilineal descendants of important headmen precede
those of the less important headmen. At Chiwalo's hut also, I [645]
have noticed that the more important headmen sit under the verandah while listening to private cases. The less important headmen sit with the commoners under a shelter or out in the sun.

I have been discussing the visible marks of prestige. But high 622
rank also tends to carry with it some other privileges which are 554
not immediately observable. The most obvious is Government 648
recognition. I have already mentioned that under the 1912 Ordinance, village headmen were recognized by the Administration. These Administrative village headmen, who had certain duties to perform, were paid a small annuity and were in earlier days given a 'book' in which the tax payments could be recorded. To-day, the Yao still describe Government recognition as 'having a book'. Administrative village headmen derived more benefit from Government recognition than merely an

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[1] The huts in Plate IX (*a*) and (*b*) are in Namwera area where there are man-eating lions. Most huts have compounds. A large proportion of huts in areas where there are no lions also have compounds.

622 annuity. This recognition publicly announced their superior
554 status, because not all headmen could be Administrative headmen.
648 We do not know exactly how the Administrative headmen were appointed when the Ordinance was introduced. The observable results, however, are that no headman, as far as I am aware, who was of superior status in the indigenous ranking system, is not an Administrative headman to-day. Being an Administrative headman is then in itself an indicator of rank.

Rather more important than this is the right to hold initiation
622 ceremonies. MacDonald says that these rights were held by the
554 chief only, but it is not clear whether the word 'chief' used here
643 refers to the village headmen or the 'chief of the land'. Now-
415 adays, the rights are held by village headmen as well as the chief.
769 The right to hold initiation ceremonies is signified by the posses-
881 sion of a small flat basket (*ciselo*) in which the oblational flour for the ceremonies is carried. When a chief grants a *ciselo* or oblational basket to a village headman, what in fact he does is to grant him permission to approach the spirits of his ancestors. The headman uses the basket on three occasions during the initiation ceremonies. First, before the ceremony is announced he pours a little cone of sorghum meal at the root of a special tree in or near the village. This tree is known as the *nsolo*, or the shrine-tree where all offerings to the ancestors are made. While he works the flour through his fingers to allow it to fall in a cone, he calls on his ancestral spirits and asks them to intercede on his behalf with the spirits of the chief's ancestors. He then formally requests permission to hold the initiation ceremony. This cone is left intact through the night. Should it collapse the interpretation is that the spirits are not willing that the ceremony should take place and it is postponed for some days. Offerings are made until eventually the cone, by remaining intact through the night, indicates that all is propitious for the ceremony
622 to be conducted. The second occasion when the oblational
554 basket is used is when the village headman or chief goes down
643 to the grass sheds where the rites of segregation and aggregation
415 take place. Here he pours flour over a twig and begs the safe
881 conduct of the initiands through this physically and mystically dangerous period. Third, each individual initiand, and his or her mother, is touched on the forehead and forearm with the flour on the evening that the initiands leave for the grass sheds. During

the last rite the owner of the oblational basket exacts a payment 622
of threepence or so from each parent. The headman does gain 554
financially from the initiation ceremony, but it would be wrong 643
to imagine that this is the only reason why he should want to
have the right to hold it. The competition for the rights, which 415
are limited to a few, is part of the general political process 881
whereby village headmen compete for privileges and advantages
over their fellows.

Village headmen may hold either the boys' or the girls' 643
initiation ceremonies, or both. Sometimes, when they hold both, 622
they delegate the girls' ceremony to a younger brother or some 554
other relative without referring to the chief. For example,
Kawinga's clan relative and important retainer, Ngalawanga, had 881
the rights to both initiation ceremonies, and he allowed his
perpetual 'son' Isa [1] to hold the girls'. Also in Nyambi area,
Majaja, who had both initiation rights, allowed his perpetual
'son' Nantunga to have the girls' ceremony. It is generally
conceded that the right to hold the boys' initiation ceremonies
is more valuable than the right to hold the girls'. H. L. Duff,
writing in 1906, had also noticed this when he wrote:

> The respective ceremonies seem to be considered as on a somewhat different footing, for the boys' *inyago* can properly be held only at the village and under the patronage of, so to say, the paramount chief of the neighbourhood, whereas the girls' initiation may take place under the auspices of an inferior headman. This distinction is still jealously observed and any breach of the chief's privileges is apt to lead to bitter dispute.[2]

The sanction the chief holds over the headmen in this respect
is mystical. A village headman believes that the initiation will
be a success (that is, that the initiands will be free from the harm
of wild beasts and illness, or the circumcision wounds of the
boys will heal quickly and well), only if the approval of the
chief's ancestors is obtained. He cannot hold the initiation 881
ceremonies, unless he has obtained the basket from the chief. 178

Most people still follow tribal initiation customs, but in the 795
extremes of the area in which I worked, religious ideas are bringing
about a change. In the north in Jalasi's area where Islam 622
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[1] The first Isa was the son of Ngalawanga and this relationship is preserved by the modern incumbents of the headmanships. See Chap. V, p. 122.

[2] Duff, H. L., *Nyasaland under the Foreign Office* (London, 1906), 312.

881 is most powerful, there is a tendency for the Islamic initiation
178 ceremony for boys, *jandu*, and the Islamic initiation ceremony
795 for girls, *nsondo*, to displace the tribal equivalents, *lupanda* and
ciputu. These Moslem initiations are conducted by Moslem
●622 teachers (*mwalimu*) and are not controlled by the chief. Though
554 it also involves the circumcision of the boys, *jandu* is very much shorter and the boys are secluded for only a week. Some say it is becoming more popular because it is less expensive for the boys' parents. In Chiwalo's area the two ceremonies are run concurrently. The boys and girls go through the normal segregation rites at the beginning of the ceremony, but an *mwalimu* circumcises the boys according to Islamic practice. At the aggregation rites at the end of the period of seclusion, the star and crescent appears as one of the symbols along with the whale (*namungumi*), antelope (*mbalapi*), leopard (*cisuwi*), and the other tribal effigies which are shown to the boys. Christianity in the south has had a similar effect. The Missions actively discouraged initiation ceremonies in the past. Many of the people in Mposa's and Malemia's area have dropped the custom, or have integrated prayers and other parts of Christian ritual into the ceremonies, though circumcision is steadfastly retained. The effect of these changes is that the important ritual control the chief had over the ceremony has been undermined, and so the prestige attached to it has also begun to fade in these areas. What I describe about the prestige of village headmen and the rights they have to initiation ceremonies is only partially true, and is falling away daily. The correlation I seek to establish is also disturbed by the fact that among the Nguru there is a slightly different initiation ceremony (*cidodoto*) for boys. Most Nguru send their boys to the Yao initiations but there are still some who hold their own traditional ceremonies. These are not within the mystical control of the chief so that some Nguru headmen are outside the competition for the initiation rights. I should say, however, that most compete with the Yao for Yao initiation rights so that this factor is not as disturbing as appears at first sight. In addition, village headmen who move into a new area usually must obtain the permission of the chief before they may use the initiation rights they held before coming into the area.

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554 There are other indicators of the general high rank of village
576 headmen. Junior headmen, like commoners, must give a special

Arabic greeting to their seniors. This is done by placing the 622
left hand on the chest and bending slightly forward to the village 554
headman, saying, '*Subaye*'. The senior should then respond, 576
'*Alaye*'. Also, important headmen are usually buried in the
centre of the village, not in the common graveyard. The tomb 766
of an important headman or personage, usually built of stones, concrete or brick, is called *nsati*. The right to bury in the village must be obtained from the chief 'because the land is his', and in Kawinga's area a fee of 6*s.* must be paid to him.

THE STRUGGLE FOR GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION

Thus far, I have been discussing the ways in which the rank of 622
village headmen may be expressed. I now describe the way in 554
which these marks of prestige are associated in the three cate- 643
gories of headmen we have distinguished, and in what way the
competition between them is phrased. I have already described 648
how all the chiefs in the areas to which I am referring are all successors of the original leaders of the invasions, and are usually the present Government representatives or Native Authorities. The people must recognize the rank of chief because mystical beliefs prescribe activities in one direction, and because the limiting structure of the White Administration does so in another. A village headman cannot hold initiation ceremonies without the permission of the chief because of the mystical sanction, but the chief also has legal authority over his subject headmen. He as Native Authority is recognized by the Government and is its representative to his people. The Native Authority Ordinance (1933) specifically imposes penalties on those who do not recognize the authority of the chief. Under Section 12 of the Ordinance, the Native Authority may arrest without warrant any person who is accused of failing to obey his order or direction, interferes with his lawful duties, professes to be a chief or assumes the duties of a chief without Government approval. Under Section 13(*i*) severe penalties are imposed on any person who conspires against or in any way attempts to undermine the lawful power and authority of any chief or Native Authority. His position is therefore greatly strengthened against the village headmen and I have been told of one or two prosecutions by chiefs under this section. Nowadays, the mere threat of

622 action under this Ordinance is sufficient to cow his opponents.
643 Therefore, the chief may also control the rise to power of his
554 headmen because he is a Government official. At the same time
648 a village headman may not move away to form a chieftaincy
of his own: should he migrate with his followers nowadays, he will always find himself under a White system of Administration which upholds some other chief against him. The rank system must operate within a circumscribed framework and in reference to the chiefs.

622 I have already mentioned that being an Administrative village
554 headman is a mark of prestige. Most of the struggle for rank
revolves around this axis. Under the 1912 Ordinance, village
648 headmen were only recognized if they had at least 20 taxable
huts under them and they were paid a small annuity proportionate to the number of their taxable huts.[1] Before a headman could be recognized, therefore, he had to gather around him at least 20 tax-payers. After a headman had been recognized, the more villagers he could attract the higher his annuity. This situation is one with which the Yao headmen were long familiar. It is indeed the same process that went on before the Whites came, and that was outlined so clearly by Duff MacDonald, except that it is now cast in slightly different form. In consonance with the new money economy, superior status, marked by more dependants, brings a higher financial reward. But it would be false to imagine that the prospect of financial gain is the only spur to a village headman's attempts to enlarge his following. A headman of a large village as such, is still a 'big' village headman.

622 A headman who has sufficient followers to enable him to
643 press a claim for a 'book' goes to the chief for it. The chief
considers the merits of the case, but is unwilling to grant too
554 many 'books' in his area. If he supports the claim the matter is
648 referred to the District Commissioner, who considers the application, not in terms of the indigenous struggle for rank, but in terms of general Administrative considerations, such as finance,

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[1] A definite rate of remuneration was fixed in 1918: it was computed at 10*s*. for every 300 taxes. See Murray, *Handbook*, 142. Under the 1933 Ordinance the remuneration was fixed at 4*d*. per Government tax of 6*s*. to a village headman and 2*d*. per 6*s*. to a Native Authority. *Report on Native Affairs for the Year Ended 31st December 1933*, Government Printer (Zomba, 1934), p. 5.

and the ease of administering groups with centralized authority. 622
If he agrees, the necessary alteration is made in the tax-registers, 643
and the new Administrative headman is paid his annuity and is 554
called up by the District Commissioner whenever he holds a 648
meeting. To the District Commissioner the chiefdom is made up of the villages on the tax-register, and in a situation of political importance he calls on the headmen of those villages for decisions. For example, when a chief was being installed, the District Commissioner called each Administrative headman forward and asked him whether he agreed to the succession. When the District Commissioner wishes to discuss any matter with a villager he calls forward the Administrative headman. The position of village headmen in the political structure becomes more effective after they have been recognized by Government.

I have no accurate measure of the proportion of all village 622
headmen who are recognized by Government. From my 648
records the percentage of Administrative village headmen out 554
of the total of recognized village headmen is:

	No. Admin. Villages	% of Total recognized
Kawinga	160	84
Liwonde	104	71
Mposa	30	48
Chikweo	48	43
Ngokwe	21	40
Chamba	61	39

I have full records for the smaller chiefdoms, Mposa, Chikweo, Ngokwe and Chamba, but I know for certain that the figures for Kawinga and Liwonde are incomplete. My fullest and most reliable records are for Ngokwe and Chikweo, so that we may estimate roughly that less than half of the village headmen are Administrative village headmen.

Naturally the village headman, whose taxable population will 622
be reduced by the granting of a new 'book', opposes this in the 554
same way as his ancestor opposed the emigration of his village 691
members in pre-White days. In 1947, in Jalasi's area for example, there was an argument hinging on this.

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Mlima was a village headman of long standing and had been recognized as an Administrative headman. Ngwaya was a headman who had come to settle under Mlima.[1] After some years Ngwaya felt that because he had his own village he should be given a 'book' and receive money from the Government. Mlima however resisted the claim, saying that his 'book' had been given to him by Jalasi. Both went to Jalasi's court so that the difference could be resolved. Jalasi rejected Ngwaya's claim and upbraided him for being recalcitrant. Ngwaya was fined 9*s.* and ordered to pay £1 to Mlima in compensation.

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A rather more complex case brings out the position of the chief, the Administration and the conflict of the prestige-giving principles of historical primacy and White recognition.

In 1948, an Administrative village headman, Kalonga, from Nyambi's area, decided to migrate down to the more fertile land along the banks of the Shire River. This land was in Jalasi's area, and it was partially occupied by a minor village headman called Malilo. Kalonga had already selected his site for the village when Malilo came up to him and told him that he was the first in that area and that Kalonga should have asked him to indicate a building site. Kalonga, on the other hand, pointed out that he was an Administrative headman and that Malilo was not, and there the matter rested. In time Kalonga, because of his official position, became better known than Malilo. Malilo was jealous of this prestige and in due course went to Jalasi and complained that Kalonga was 'getting too big for his boots'[2] and that he was only a Newcomer into that area. Jalasi sent for Kalonga.

At the dispute in front of the chief, Malilo reiterated his complaint. Kalonga merely pointed out that Malilo was jealous of his 'book'. Jalasi dismissed the case reminding the two headmen that it was he who was chief of the country. Shortly after this, Kalonga went to Jalasi alone and told him that Malilo had told him that he, Jalasi, was no chief because he should have taken the 'book' and given it to Malilo. Jalasi said, 'It is impossible to change over the "books" which are written by the Whites', and then sent a messenger to bring Malilo to court. When he came he denied the tale and said that as far as he knew the only reason for Kalonga's animosity could be that he had refused to give him the *subaye* greeting. Jalasi informed both headmen that they were to be independent of each other. Malilo

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[1] *Kwakulipatika*—lit. one who had made himself a slave.

[2] *Kulikwesya*—reflexive causative of the verb *kukwela*, to climb, i.e. to cause oneself to climb or to exalt one's status.

was to report strangers coming into his village area independently 622
of Kalonga. Nowadays, there is much tension between the two head- 554
men and they summon each other to court on the slightest pretext. 643
The peace is kept only by order of Jalasi. On the whole, however, it 691
is Kalonga who has the higher status and superior prestige.

Unfortunately I have no figures to show how large a village 622
becomes before its headman applies for Government recogni- 554
tion. The average number of tax-payers under village headmen 643
who have just been granted 'books' might have provided this information, but I was unable to collect it. Formerly, they could become Administrative headmen only if they had more than 20 tax-payers under them. Nowadays, however, owing to differential fertility and the reduction in size of villages because of internal dissension, many of the Administrative villages (22 per cent) are smaller than the 20 tax-payer limit. They, however, retain their 'books'. I know that often within the Administrative villages of important headmen or chiefs, there are contained some minor villages bigger than some Administrative villages which are farther away. For example, in Chiwalo's own Administrative village, I know that the villages of Selemani, Ali Kasoka and Ntapasia are larger than many Administrative villages. It is not only the size of the village which allows a headman to apply for a 'book'. It is his relative status in the community. Men of higher rank than Selemani, Ali Kasoka and Ntapasia could probably approach Chiwalo and ask him for a 'book'. But these three are Newcomers. Selemani was a refugee from the Portuguese wars and went to live in Mlumbe area in Zomba district. He came to Chiwalo's area in about 1930. Ali Kasoka moved in about 1940. Ntapasia came about 1921. But they dare not approach Chiwalo himself to ask for a 'book'. Here Chiwalo's rôle of chief is compounded with his rôle of Administrative village headman so that they would be asking Chiwalo voluntarily to reduce the size of his Administrative village. It is only when their villages become conspicuously large that headmen may begin to force the chief's hand. They have always one sanction they can bring to bear on the chief—they can threaten to move out of his area into another chiefdom. The chief may not retain any of his subjects by force. If they express a wish to live in another chiefdom he cannot stop them. On the other hand, useful as this weapon

622 is when it is used by an Administrative village headman, as I
554 shall illustrate later, it will not serve a minor village headman
643 much to move out of one chiefdom to another if his object is
to become recognized as an Administrative village headman. If he goes to another chiefdom he is automatically regarded as one of the most junior of the headmen. If he goes to another chiefdom as an Administrative village headman already, he takes with him his 'book' and to some extent the rank associated with it.

The size of Administrative villages as measured by the number
162 of tax-payers in them is about equal in all three categories
621 of village headmen. Table X sets out the distribution. The
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TABLE X

DISTRIBUTION BY SIZE OF VILLAGES UNDER ABORIGINAL, INVADER AND NEWCOMER ADMINISTRATIVE HEADMEN

Tax-payers	Totals			Total	Percentages			Total
	Aborigines*	Invaders	Newcomers†		Aborigines	Invaders	Newcomers	
0–19	6	29	56	91	30·0	21·3	22·0	22·2
20–39	7	49	85	141	35·0	36·0	33·5	34·4
40–59	2	25	57	84	10·0	18·4	22·4	20·5
60–79	3	16	29	48	15·0	11·8	11·4	11·7
80–99	1	1	13	15	5·0	0·7	5·1	3·7
100–119	1	6	4	11	5·0	4·4	1·6	2·7
120–139	—	4	4	8	—	2·9	1·6	2·0
140–159	—	1	1	2	—	0·7	0·4	0·5
160–179	—	1	1	2	—	0·7	0·4	0·5
180–199	—	1	1	2	—	0·7	0·4	0·5
200–249	—	3	—	3	—	2·2	—	0·7
250–300	—	—	3	3	—	—	1·2	0·7
Totals .	20	136	254	410‡	100·0	99·8	100·0	100·1
Mean .	39·0	48·5	45·1	45·9				
S.E. .	8·7	4·2	2·8	2·2				

* Excludes one village whose size was unknown.
† Excludes 3 villages whose sizes were unknown.
‡ The total excludes an additional 10 villages for which full details were not recorded.

Administrative villages of the Aborigines, mostly Nyanja, appear to be rather smaller than those of the Invaders and Newcomers.

There were only 20 villages in that sample and the difference 162
may not be significant though the distribution is skewed to the
smaller villages. The mean number of tax-payers under Invader 621
village headmen was slightly larger than that under Newcomers, 622
but the difference was not significant.[1] Among the Invaders are included the chiefs and *ndunas* who usually have villages of over 100 tax-payers. Smaller villages are less likely to break away from chiefs and *ndunas* than they are from Newcomers and less important men.

Village headmen may exploit their connections with the chief in their competition with their fellows for Government recognition. In Tables XI to XIV inclusive, I have used the material I collected in Mposa, Chamba, Chikweo and Ngokwe areas only, because I know that my survey did not include many headmen in Kawinga and Liwonde areas. The total in these tables includes both Administrative and non-Administrative village headmen. From Table XI it is clear that there is a significantly greater proportion of headmen of Invader descent than headmen of Newcomer descent who are recognized as Administrative headmen.[2] The percentage of Aborigines who are Administrative headmen is highest of all but it is based on such a small number that not much value can be placed on it.

TABLE XI

PROPORTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE VILLAGE HEADMEN AMONG ALL VILLAGE HEADMEN OF THE THREE CATEGORIES IN CHIKWEO, NGOKWE, CHAMBA AND MPOSA AREAS

Type of Headman	Aborigines	Invaders	Newcomers	Total
Administrative . . .	12	61	77	150
Non-Administrative .	1	37	111	149
Total	13	98	188	299
% Admin. Headmen.	92·3	62·2	41·0	50·2

$n = 2$; $\chi^2 = 21{\cdot}34$; $p = 0{\cdot}00002$.

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[1] Diff. of means = 3·4; S.E. of diff. = 4·5; C.R. = 0·76; $p = 0{\cdot}4472$.

[2] Diff. of per cent = 21·2; S.E. of diff. = 6·07; C.R. = 3·49; $p = 0{\cdot}00048$.

TABLE XII

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621
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PROPORTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE VILLAGE HEADMEN AMONG ALL VILLAGE HEADMEN WHO ARE RELATED AND NOT RELATED TO THE CHIEF IN CHIKWEO, NGOKWE, CHAMBA AND MPOSA AREAS

Type of Headman	Relatives		Non-Relatives	Total
	Direct	Clan		
Administrative . . .	38	36	76	150
Non-Administrative .	16	24	109	149
Total	54	60	185	299
% Admin. Headmen.	70·4	60·0	41·1	50·2

$n = 2$; $\chi^2 = 17{\cdot}23$; $p = 0{\cdot}00018$.

Table XII shows that among the chief's direct relatives (i.e. those who can trace some direct link, matrilineally, patrilaterally or affinally to the chief) there are more Administrative headmen than among the relatives who are related only through clan links. Further, it shows that there are more Administrative headmen among the chief's relatives as a whole than among those headmen who are not related to him at all.

It seems probable also that village headmen have used their link to the chiefs through religion to prosecute their claims to rank. From Table XIII we see that there are more Moslem

TABLE XIII

PROPORTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEADMEN AMONG ALL VILLAGE HEADMEN OF THE SAME RELIGION AS, OR DIFFERENT RELIGION FROM, THAT OF THE CHIEF (ISLAM) IN CHIKWEO, NGOKWE, CHAMBA AND MPOSA AREAS

Type of Headman	Moslem	Christian	Pagan	Total
Administrative . . .	113	27	9	149
Non-Administrative .	93	31	21	145
Total	206	58	30	294*
% Admin. Headmen.	54·9	46·6	30·0	50·2

$n = 2$; $\chi^2 = 6{\cdot}97$; $p = 0{\cdot}03078$.

* Excludes 5 village headmen whose religion I did not record.

Administrative headmen than either Christian or Pagan. The 162
chiefs, of course, are all Moslem.

Lastly, the same trend is seen among those headmen who are 621
of the same tribe as the chief, against those who are of other 622
tribes (Table XIV). Here, however, the difference is so small that it may easily have arisen by chance. These factors, however, do not operate independently. There are more co-tribesmen, co-religionists and relatives of the chief among the Invaders than among the other categories. In other words, the factors are all intercorrelated and it is possible to consider any particular factor as the independent variable. From the point of view of the people themselves, to be an Invader is to have one of the best claims on the chief to become an Administrative headman.

TABLE XIV

PROPORTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEADMEN AMONG ALL VILLAGE HEADMEN OF THE SAME TRIBE AS, OR DIFFERENT TRIBES FROM, THE CHIEF IN CHIKWEO, NGOKWE, CHAMBA AND MPOSA AREAS

Type of Headman	Same Tribe	Different Tribe	Total
Administrative	85	65	150
Non-Administrative	76	73	149
Total	161	138	299
% Administrative Headmen .	52·8	47·1	50·2

$n = 1$; $\chi^2 = 0{\cdot}95$; $p = 0{\cdot}3422$.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SCARLET HEADBAND

Government recognition therefore provides the means whereby 622
headmen are ranked in two major categories. But Administra- 554
tive village headmen themselves are ranked by a number of 292
prestige-indicating characteristics. The most important of these are the right to wear a plain scarlet headband and the right to hold boys' and girls' initiation ceremonies.

Of these two additional marks of rank the more important is the right to wear the scarlet headband. This headband is wrapped round the head, turban fashion. Most village headmen wear a headband of some sort, either of white or coloured cloth,

● 622 while most commoners do not. In Kawinga-Liwonde area,
554 village headmen of high rank are entitled to wear a plain scarlet
292 headband (*mlangali*). One informant suggested to me that the plain scarlet stands for blood, i.e. it indicates one of the most important elements in rank to-day—warrior ancestry. I do not know that this opinion is well supported. Among the 424 village headmen I enquired about, 24 or 5·7 per cent were entitled to this mark of honour. Of these, three were Aboriginal Nyanja headmen, 17 were Invaders, and only four were Newcomers. Of the four Newcomers, one had the right to hold it before he had come to the area from Portuguese East Africa and that was before the White conquest; one living in Chamba's area had brought it from Liwonde's area where he had been given the right to wear it; and the other two were in Chikweo's area and were given the right by the present Chikweo. The three Aborigines who wear the scarlet headbands are Kuzumbu in Kawinga's area, and Mbeta and Mbande in Mposa's area. All three are settled around the shores of Lake Shirwa and they are said to have been the original Nyanja chiefs in this area when the Yao invaded. These chiefs also have boys' and girls' initiation rights. The rank they held in their own tribal communities is recognized by the Yao, who in any case ascribe superior status to the first-comers into an area. With the Nyanja chiefs the position became ambiguous. They had superior rank in that they were in occupation of the land before the Yao moved in. At the same time when they subjugated themselves to the Yao they accepted servility. Nowadays, the Nyanja are well integrated into the political life of the area and carry on their existence along the lake shores, still going to their traditional chief for the settlement of most of the cases not involving heavy compensation.

All Invader chieftains have scarlet headbands. Some of their direct relatives such as Stora, their clan relatives such as Nsanama and Mapundu, or their patrilateral relatives such as Cibwana Liwonde, the son of the first Liwonde, also have them. After these the next important group who are entitled to wear them are the *ndunas*. Examples are Kangomba, Masinde and Cindamba in Kawinga's area and Makaca in Ngokwe area. The *ndunas* are village headmen, usually unrelated to the chief, but who have been long associated with him, and who are his

councillors. Long ago they held a most important position 622
within the chiefdom. They were the loyal headmen and intimates 554
of the chief, who could therefore be entrusted with the
government of outer areas. They were posted to various parts [292]
of the chiefdom; kept the chief advised of war and attacks;
maintained the peace among the village headmen in their areas;
and collected the ivory to which the chief was entitled and sent
it to him. Nowadays, the *ndunas* find themselves in competition
with other officials who have arisen from the White Administrative
system. The chief also finds advisers and councillors in his [644]
court clerks and his court sergeants, but the *ndunas* still have much
prestige and advise and assist the chief in his administration
of the area. Earlier, I mentioned that a senior headman was [576]
allowed to have a mat to himself, and only his own friends and
people of his rank could occupy it with him. The only people
in the chiefdom who could share the chief's mat, were the
ndunas, and they called him *anganga* (my friend). Because the
ndunas were not related to the chief they were in the peculiar
position of being able to settle quarrels between the chief and his
family: they were the arbitrators in arguments between the
chief and his 'younger brothers' (junior male matrilineal relatives),
or the chief and his wives. By Yao custom, rank is
inherited by a village headman's successor, so that the relationship
between the chief and his *ndunas* is perpetuated through successive
incumbents. In Kawinga's area, for example, the *ndunas* to-day
have the same name and the same relationship and relative
position with regard to the chief as the *ndunas* who invaded the
country nearly 100 years ago. This traditional ranking of village
headmen emerges as soon as the Government alters its policy.
Recently, when the idea of group headmen was reintroduced,
the chief nominated the *ndunas* to become group headmen—a
position not unlike that they held before the White conquest.

There is considerable difference between the size of Administrative 622
villages under those headmen who have the right to 554
wear the scarlet headband and those who have not. Table XV 292
shows this clearly. The mean number of tax-payers under the
former headmen is 80, while under the latter it is only 38. Among
the village headmen with the right to wear the scarlet headband
62·5 per cent had villages of more than 60 tax-payers, while
among other headmen only 25·0 per cent of the villages were in

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TABLE XV

SIZE OF ADMINISTRATIVE VILLAGES UNDER HEADMEN WITH SCARLET HEADBANDS AND THOSE WITHOUT

No. of Tax-payers	Without Scarlet Headband	With Scarlet Headband	Total	% Headmen with S.H.
Under 40	225	7	232	3·0
40–79	125	7	132	5·3
80–119	23	3	26	11·5
120–139	6	2	8	25·0
140 and over	7	5	12	41·7
Total	386	24	410*	5·9

Combining villages of more than 80 tax-payers.

$n = 2$; $\chi^2 = 24{\cdot}56$; $p < 0{\cdot}0001$.

* Excludes 4 villages in which the numbers of tax-payers were unknown.

this category.[1] The village headmen who are entitled to wear the scarlet headband are mainly Invaders and people of high rank. Their villages are large because of their rank as well as vice versa.

I have never heard of a village headman's wearing a scarlet headband without the chief's permission, and I am not sure what sanctions the chief would apply to prevent it. I have heard men say that village headmen who are not entitled to wear it do so if they live far away, but take it off when they come near the chief's court. However, this was only in casual conversation and I did not have an opportunity to check it. From the point of view of the people the right is so bound up with traditional status that it is almost inconceivable that the custom should be flouted. As we have seen, among the Newcomers only two have been given the right within the last 30 years.

Yet the significance of the scarlet headband differs considerably from area to area. In Malemia and in Jalasi areas the custom seems either to have fallen away or never to have existed. In Jalasi area Islam may have some effect. In Malemia area the majority are Christians and most headmen have taken to

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[1] Diff. of per cent = 37·5; S.E. of diff. = 9·77; C.R. = 3·83; $p = 0{\cdot}0001$.

European-type clothing. In Nyambi area, abutting on Kawinga- 622
Liwonde area in the north, there are 12 Administrative village 554
headmen out of 57 who are entitled to the scarlet headband 292
(21 per cent). For the Kawinga–Liwonde area the percentage is 5·7. An informant explained why a large proportion of headmen in Nyambi area had the right to wear the headband: 'The old Nyambis and the present one do not care. If a man has many huts, and if he says that his uncle had a scarlet headband, then he is given one too.' Even within the Kawinga–Liwonde area there is some variation in the number of headmen who are entitled to the scarlet headband. The following table sets this out.

Chiefdom	Total Admin. Headmen	% Scarlet Headbands
Kawinga	160	3·7
Liwonde	104	4·8
Mposa	30	10·0
Chikweo	48	8·4
Ngokwe	21	14·2
Chamba	61	4·9

Mposa area near Lake Chirwa shows such a high proportion because of the Nyanja ex-chiefs who are entitled to the scarlet headband. Chikweo and Ngokwe on the other hand are the Mpotola chiefs and seem to have taken the same attitude as Nyambi and his predecessors. In contrast to the statement about Nyambi, one Administrative headman in Mposa's area said: 'The chief's scarlet band is good enough for us all. If each had one it would be too gaudy!'

THE STRUGGLE FOR INITIATION RIGHTS

Village headmen are generally outside competition for the 622
right to wear the scarlet headband. These rights have been 554
established largely by ancient custom and are almost confined to 881
the Invaders or to those who have had them before they came into the area. The competition for initiation rights, however, goes on steadily. H. L. Duff had noticed this as early as 1906.[1] Newcomers may approach the chief and agitate for the rights,

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[1] See p. 81.

622 554 881 pressing their claims on many grounds. They may stress that they have a large village under them and that they have many children to initiate, and argue that their villages are far away from the nearest headman who has these rights. Or they may use their rank and connection with the chief. If all else fails they may threaten to move to another chiefdom. Punyu threatened to do this.

622 554 881 578 In 1947, Punyu, an Administrative village headman in Chiwalo area, had 43 tax-payers under him and thought that he should have initiation rights. He had come to Chiwalo's in 1933 after the village had split in Chikowi's area near Zomba. He had relatives in Kapaloma's village in Chiwalo's area. He argued with Chiwalo that his uncle had had initiation rights. Chiwalo on the other hand, argued that Punyu village was so close to his own—a matter of under a mile—that he could not consider it. This argument went on for some months. Eventually Punyu told the chief that he was going to leave his area. Chiwalo then recanted to some extent and offered Punyu the permission to use the *ciputu* basket, that is, the right to conduct girls' initiation ceremonies. Punyu, after consulting his sister, took this and was satisfied.

But the chief is not always cowed by the threat to leave his area. He is sometimes able to draw on his official position to control his headmen. The argument between Makata and Ntimbuka illustrates this very well.

Makata was an Administrative headman of some standing in Chiwalo's area. He had been one of the invading headmen and was entitled to wear the scarlet headband. In 1947, he had 101 tax-payers under him and had been given the right to hold boys' and girls' initiation ceremonies at least 30 years ago. Ntimbuka on the other hand was a comparative newcomer. He came from Kawinga's area in about 1930. He is of Nyanja stock but has adopted the Yao language and customs. His village in 1947 had 23 tax-payers and was about 300 yards from Makata's. Early in 1947, Ntimbuka started quarrelling with Makata about the right to boys' initiation ceremonies. He felt that he ought to have rights as well as Makata. Eventually he told Makata that he would refuse to take the boys to his initiation ceremonies. Seething with discontent Ntimbuka went to complain about Makata to Chiwalo, and told him that he had had an argument with Makata and that he was going to leave the area because of it. Chiwalo called Makata and asked him what the trouble was. Makata told Chiwalo that Ntimbuka was jealous of the basket. Chiwalo

then told Ntimbuka that he could not give a sacrifice basket to him 622
because his village was so close to Makata's. Ntimbuka was not 554
satisfied with this and continued agitating. Chiwalo, at last exasperated, 881
threatened Ntimbuka that if he had any more trouble he would
send him to Kawinga to be dealt with. Kawinga of course is the 578
Native Authority in the area and holds the power of arresting headmen under Section 12 of the Ordinance. Ntimbuka was duly cowed by this threat and meekly agreed to send his boys to Makata's initiation ceremonies.

Chiwalo had to support Makata against Ntimbuka. Makata was a powerful headman: he had rank from his descent and a large village under him. Ntimbuka was a Newcomer and he had only a fifth of the followers that Makata had. If it meant losing followers it was better to lose the smaller village. As it was Chiwalo could use the power of the White Administration to keep Ntimbuka within his area and yet keep him subservient.

A Newcomer is unlikely to be given both boys' and girls' 622
initiation rights. He is more likely to be able to get only one 554
of the rights. Table XVI sets out the number of headmen in 881
each category who hold initiation ceremonies. While more Invaders have the right to both ceremonies the proportion holding

TABLE XVI

NUMBERS OF HEADMEN HOLDING BOYS' AND GIRLS' INITIATION RIGHTS AMONG ABORIGINAL, INVADER AND NEWCOMER HEADMEN

Type of Initiation Right	Aborigines	Invaders	Newcomers	Total
Both boys' and girls' init. rights . . .	—	17	14	31
Boys' init. rights only .	1	6	10	17
Girls' init. rights only .	1	12	31	44
No init. rights . . .	16	84	198	298
Total	18	119	253	390*
% Init. holders . .	11·5	29·4	21·7	24·5

Combining Aboriginal and Invader totals.

$n = 3$; $\chi^2 = 6{\cdot}48$; $p = 0{\cdot}09254$.

* Total excludes the 24 headmen who have the right to wear the scarlet headband.

622 554 881 only one is roughly the same.[1] A Newcomer may approach the chief and ask for initiation rights in certain circumstances only. In general, these are that his village is a very large one, that he had the rights in the area from which he has just come, and/or that he is living in so isolated a part that it would be a hardship for his children to go to the nearest other headman who holds the rights; but he may press his claim if he is related to the chief and can approach him as a kinsman.

There is little doubt that the rights are closely associated with the size of the villages:

TABLE XVIIa

INITIATION RIGHTS AMONG INVADER AND NEWCOMER HEADMEN WHO HAVE VILLAGES WITH MORE AND LESS THAN 60 TAX-PAYERS

(The figures in brackets are percentages)

Type of Init. Right	Over 60		Under 60		Total
	Invader	Newcomer	Invader	Newcomer	
Both init. rights . .	10 (32·3)	9 (29·0)	7 (22·6)	5 (16·1)	31 (100·0)
Boys' init. rights only .	2 (12·4)	5 (31·3)	4 (25·0)	5 (31·3)	16 (100·0)
Girls' init. rights only .	2 (4·8)	13 (31·0)	10 (23·8)	17 (40·4)	42 (100·0)*
No init. rights	9 (23·2)	26 (9·3)	75 (26·8)	170 (60·7)	280 (100·0)†
Total . .	23 (6·2)	53 (14·4)	96 (26·0)	197 (53·4)	369 (100·0)

$n = 3$‡; $\chi^2 = 53{\cdot}49$; $p < 0{\cdot}0001$.

* Excludes 1 village whose size was unknown.
† Excludes 2 villages whose sizes were unknown.
‡ Combining Invader and Newcomer groups.

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[1] Invaders with both initiation rights (17 of 119) = 14·3 per cent; Newcomers with both initiation rights (14 of 253) = 5·5 per cent; Diff. of per cent = 8·8; S.E. of diff. = 3·07; C.R. = 2·85; $p = 0{\cdot}0044$.

Invaders with rights to only one of the initiations (18 of 119) = 15·1 per cent; Newcomers with rights to only one of the initiations (41 of 253) = 16·2 per cent.

TABLE XVIII*b*

INITIATION RIGHTS AMONG INVADER AND NEWCOMER HEADMEN WHO HAVE VILLAGES WITH MORE AND LESS THAN 60 TAX-PAYERS 622 554 881

(Arranged to hold the influence of village size fixed)

Type of Headman	Over 60		Under 60		Total
	Init.	No Init.	Init.	No Init.	
Invaders . .	14 (11·8)	9 (7·6)	21 (17·6)	75 (63·0)	119 (100·0)
Newcomers .	27 (10·8)	26 (10·4)	27 (10·8)	170 (68·0)	250 (100·0)
Total . .	41 (11·1)	35 (9·5)	48 (13·0)	245 (66·4)	369 (100·0)

$n = 3$; $\chi^2 = 3{\cdot}96$; $p = 0{\cdot}26667$.

Among all headmen (Table XVII*a*) :

19 of 31 headmen who hold both initiation rights have villages with more than 60 tax-payers . . . . = 61·3%

7 of 16 headmen who hold only the boys' initiation rights have villages with more than 60 tax-payers . . . . = 43·7%

15 of 42 headmen who hold only the girls' initiation rights have villages of more than 60 tax-payers . . . . = 35·7%

35 of 280 headmen who hold no initiation rights have villages with more than 60 tax-payers . . . . = 12·5%

When the influence of village-size is held constant the advantages of Invaders over Newcomers in the competition for initiation rights is discernible, but the differences are so small that they are of doubtful significance (Table XVIII*b*).

14 of 23 Invader headmen with villages over 60 tax-payers have initiation rights . . . . = 60·9%

27 of 53 non-Invader headmen with villages over 60 tax-payers have initiation rights . . . . = 50·9%

21 of 96 Invader headmen with villages less than 60 tax-payers have initiation rights . . . . = 21·9%

27 of 197 non-Invader headmen with villages less than 60 tax-payers have initiation rights . . . . = 13·7%

As we may anticipate, relationship with the chief is an im- 622
portant factor in the competition for initiation rights. Among 643
the chief's direct and clan relatives for example, 36·4 per cent 554
(51 of 140) hold initiation rights, but only 16·8 per cent (39 of 881

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TABLE XVIII

INITIATION RIGHTS AMONGST INVADER AND NEWCOMER HEADMEN WHO ARE RELATED AND UNRELATED TO THE CHIEF

Type of Initiation Holder	Invader				Newcomer				Total
	D	C	N	T	D	C	N	T	
Both init. rights .	5	8	4	17	2	3	9	14	31
Boys' init. rights only	2	2	2	6	1	1	8	10	16
Girls' init. rights only	5	5	2	12	5	12	14	31	43
No init. rights . .	26	25	33	84	13	25	160	198	282
Total	38	40	41	119	21	41	191	253	372
% Init. holders .	31·6	40·0	24·2	29·4	38·1	39·0	19·4	21·7	24·2

D = Direct relatives; C = Clan relatives; N = Non-relatives; T = Subtotals.

Combining Invader and Newcomer totals.

$n = 6$; $\chi^2 = 22{\cdot}24$; $p = 0{\cdot}00112$.

232) of his non-relatives hold them [1] (Table XVIII). There is a slightly greater proportion of the clan relatives holding initiation rights than direct kinsmen, but the difference is insignificant.[2] Slightly more of the chief's relatives among the Newcomers hold initiation rights than those among the Invaders,[3] but once again the difference is so small that it might easily have arisen by chance. A much greater proportion of Invaders is related to the chief than of Newcomers,[4] so that among the Invaders the relative advantage of their kinship with the chief, as against the unrelated, is somewhat reduced. There are very many Invaders who can claim kinship with the chief in their struggle for initiation rights. Among the Newcomers, conversely, because there

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[1] Diff. of per cent = 19·6; S.E. of diff. = 4·58; C.R. = 4·28; $p = 0{\cdot}00002$.

[2] Direct relatives (20 of 59) = 33·9 per cent; Clan relatives (31 of 81) = 38·2 per cent; Diff. of per cent = 4·3; S.E. of diff. = 8·2; C.R. = 0·52; $p = 0{\cdot}6030$.

[3] Newcomers (24 of 62) = 38·7 per cent; Invaders (27 of 78) = 34·6 per cent; Diff. of per cent = 4·1; S.E. of diff. = 8·2; C.R. = 0·5; $p = 0{\cdot}6170$.

[4] Excluding those entitled to wear the scarlet headband. Invaders (78 of 119) = 65·6 per cent; Newcomers (62 of 253) = 24·5 per cent.

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are so few of the chief's kinsmen among them, to be related to the chief is a distinct advantage in this struggle.

I recorded the origin of the initiation rights of only 38 of the 55 Newcomer headmen who hold these, excluding those who also have the right to wear the scarlet headband. Table XIX sets out these data. We cannot put too much reliance on these figures because they cover only about three-quarters of the village headmen in this category, and these, moreover, were not randomly selected. As they stand, the figures support my earlier conclusion that Newcomers are more likely to obtain rights for only one initiation ceremony, than for both together. While 38·5 per cent (5 of 13) of the village headmen who hold both initiation ceremonies had brought in their rights with them from outside, only 4·0 per cent (1 of 25) of those who hold only one of the rights had done so.[1] An analysis of the periods when headmen were given their rights reveals consistent results.

TABLE XIX

THE ORIGIN OF INITIATION RIGHTS OF SOME NEWCOMER HEADMEN

Type of Initiation Right	Given by Chief of present residential chieftaincy	Brought from elsewhere	Total	% Brought in
Both init. rights . .	8	5	13	38
Boys' init. rights only .	9	0	9	0
Girls' init. rights only .	15	1	16	6
Total	32	6	38	16

From Table XX we see that:

Of 11 Invaders who hold rights to both initiation ceremonies, recent chiefs granted 3 . . . . = 27·3%
Of 8 Newcomers who hold rights to both initiation ceremonies, recent chiefs granted 2 . . . . = 25·0%
Of 12 Invaders who hold rights to only one of the initiation ceremonies, recent chiefs granted 3 . . . . = 25·0%
Of 24 Newcomers who hold rights to only one of the initiation ceremonies, recent chiefs granted 14 . . . . . . = 58·3%

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[1] Diff. of per cent = 34·5; S.E. of diff. = 12·47; C.R. = 2·77; $p = 0{\cdot}0056$.

TABLE XX

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WHEN INITIATION RIGHTS WERE GRANTED TO NEWCOMERS AND INVADERS

Type of Initiation Right	By early Chiefs		By recent Chiefs*		Total
	Invaders	Newcomers	Invaders	Newcomers	
Both init. . .	8	6	3	2	19
One init. only .	9	10	3	14	36
Total . . .	17	16	6	16	55

* This is obviously a crude classification. I have taken roughly 35 years as the dividing line. As the early chiefs I have classified all the Kawingas before and including Kawinga V who died in 1913; all the Liwondes before and including Liwonde III who died in 1921; all the Ngokwes before and including Ngokwe IV who died in 1905; all the Mposas before and including Mposa II who died in 1913; and all the Chikweos before and including Chikweo II who died in 1914.

In other words, recent chiefs have been granting single initiation rights to Invaders in the same proportion as they have been granting both rights, but they have been granting Newcomer headmen the right to hold only one ceremony more often than the right to hold both. Of the six sets of rights to initiation ceremonies granted by recent chiefs to Invader headmen, three were rights to hold only one ceremony, while 14 of the 16 initiation rights granted to Newcomer headmen were for one ceremony only.[1]

622 Headmen do not make use of their bonds of common religion
554 or tribe with the chief in their competition for initiation rights.
Table XXI sets out the numbers of headmen of different religion.
881 There is a substantially smaller proportion of Pagan headmen
795 (9·7 per cent) holding initiation ceremonies than either Christians
619 (25·5 per cent) or Moslems (24·4 per cent).[2] Most Pagans, how-
ever, are also Newcomers so that this difference is actually a
reflex of the generally lower rank of Newcomers. Table XXII
sets out the number of headmen of the chief's tribe and of other

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[1] i.e. 50·0 per cent against 87·5 per cent; diff. of per cent = 37·5; S.E. of diff. = 20·08; C.R. = 1·87; $p = 0{\cdot}0614$.

[2] Pagans = 9·7 per cent; Others 24·6 per cent; diff of per cent = 14·9; S.E. of diff. = 7·94; C.R. = 1·88; $p = 0{\cdot}0603$.

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TABLE XXI

The Distribution of Initiation Rights among Headmen of Different Religions

Type of Initiation Holder	Moslem	Christian	Pagan	Total
Both init. rights . .	25	4	1	30*
Boys' init. rights only .	12	4	—	16
Girls' init. rights only .	31	6	2	39†
No init. rights . . .	211	41	28	280‡
Total	279	55	31	365

$n = 6$; $\chi^2 = 5\cdot05$; $p = 0\cdot53778$.

* Excludes 1 headman whose religion was unrecorded.
† Excludes 4 headmen whose religion was unrecorded.
‡ Excludes 2 headmen whose religion was unrecorded.

TABLE XXII

The Distribution of Initiation Rights among Headmen of the Same and Different Tribe as the Chief

Type of Initiation Holder	Same Tribe	Different Tribe	Total
Both init. holders	20	11	31
Boys' init. holders only . . .	7	9	16
Girls' init. holders only . . .	23	20	43
No init. rights	156	126	282
Total	206	166	372
% Init. holders	24·3	24·1	24·2

$n = 3$; $\chi^2 = 2\cdot17$; $p = 0\cdot54167$.

tribes who hold initiation rights. Once again the proportion of headmen of the same tribe as the chief who hold initiation rights is the same as that of headmen of different tribes from the chief. We may say, therefore, that membership of tribe is not an operative factor in the granting of initiation rights.[1]

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[1] The factors contributing to the granting of initiation rights are obviously all intercorrelated.

622 554 881 292 The right to hold initiation ceremonies may be held concurrently with the right to wear a scarlet headband. For purposes of analysis thus far, I have treated the holding of initiation ceremonies separately. By common consensus, the wearing of this headband is an indicator of much greater rank than the holding of initiation ceremonies. The highest ranking headmen, like the chiefs, usually have the right to wear the scarlet headband together with the rights to both initiation ceremonies. In order to show how rank varies among the main categories of village headmen I have devised a numerical

TABLE XXIII

MARKS OF RANK AMONG ADMINISTRATIVE VILLAGE HEADMEN

Type of Headman	With Headband				Without Headband				Total
	Both	Boys only	Girls only	No rights	Both	Boys only	Girls only	No rights	
Aborigines :									
Direct rel.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
Clan rel.	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2
No rel. .	2	—	—	—	—	1	1	13	17
Total .	3	—	—	—	—	1	1	16	21
Invaders :									
Direct rel.	8	1	—	—	5	2	5	26	47
Clan rel.	4	—	—	—	8	2	5	25	44
No rel. .	3	—	—	1	4	2	2	33	45
Total .	15	1	—	1	17	6	12	84	136
Newcomers :									
Direct rel.	—	—	—	—	2	1	5	13	21
Clan rel.	—	1	1	—	3	1	12	25	43
No rel. .	1	—	—	1	9	8	14	160	193
Total .	1	1	1	1	14	10	31	198	257
Grand total	19	2	1	2	31	17	44	298	414

system of ranking. I have assumed that the rarer the mark of 622
rank the higher the rank it indicates. Table XXIII sets out the 554
incidence of marks of rank among the 414 Administrative village 881
headmen for whom I have recorded the data. In all, there were 292
24 headmen with scarlet headbands, 69 with boys' initiation ceremonies and 95 with girls' initiation ceremonies. I have given the holding of a scarlet headband the value of the reciprocal of the proportion of village headmen who hold that right, i.e. 414/24 = 17·3.

The value of holding a boys' initiation ceremony by the same procedure is: 414/69 = 6·0.

The value of holding a girls' initiation ceremony is: 414/95 = 4·4.

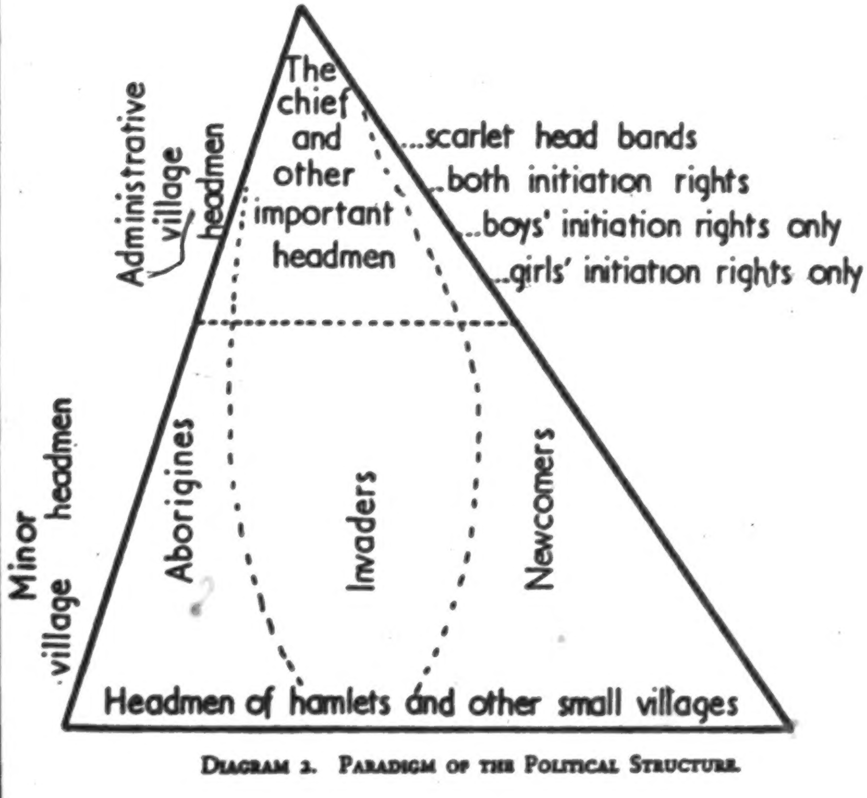
The chief and other important headmen
Administrative village headmen
...scarlet head bands
..both initiation rights
..boys' initiation rights only
..girls' initiation rights only
Minor village headmen
Aborigines
Invaders
Newcomers
Headmen of hamlets and other small villages

DIAGRAM 2. PARADIGM OF THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE.

622 The value of holding the various combinations of rights then
554 are these :

881 Scarlet headband and both initiation ceremonies . . . . = 27·7
Scarlet headband and boys' initiation ceremony . . . . = 23·3
292 Scarlet headband and girls' initiation ceremony . . . . = 21·7
Scarlet headband alone . . . . = 17·3
Both initiation ceremonies . . . . = 10·4
Boys' initiation ceremony only . . . . = 6·0
Girls' initiation ceremony only . . . . = 4·4

We may now score the rank of headmen within any particular category by estimating the percentage score from a possible. For example, the score of the rank among Aboriginal headmen would be :

3 × 27·7 = 83·1
1 × 6·0 = 6·0
1 × 4·4 = 4·4
93·5 (expressed as a percentage of 21 × 27·7 = 16·1)

622 Using this method I have set out in Table XXIV the rank
622 scores for headmen in the categories in Table XXIII. Table
554 XXIV shows that on the whole ranking among the Invader

TABLE XXIV

RANK SCORES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE VILLAGE HEADMEN OF DIFFERENT CATEGORIES

Aborigines :		
Chief's direct relatives	0	
Chief's clan relatives	50·0	
Chief's non-relatives	14·0	
All Aborigines		16·1
Invaders :		
Chief's direct relatives	25·4	
Chief's clan relatives	18·7	
Chief's non-relatives	13·1	
All Invader headmen		19·2
Newcomers :		
Chief's direct relatives	8·4	
Chief's clan relatives	11·3	
Chief's non-relatives	4·6	
All Newcomer headmen		6·1
All chief's direct relatives		19·6
All chief's clan relatives		15·8
All chief's non-relatives		6·8

headmen is higher than among the Aborigines or the New- 622
comers. It also shows quite clearly that the chief's direct relatives 554
hold more of the privileges associated with rank than his clan relatives do, and they in turn hold more than his non-relatives.

THE POLITICAL PROCESS AS A STRUGGLE OF HEADMEN AGAINST THE CHIEF

Modern chiefdoms appear to be organized on essentially the 643
same principles as those described by Duff MacDonald. A 622
chiefdom is headed by a chief and under him his subjects are 554
organized in villages. Each village is represented by a head- 178
man, who stands in a relationship to the chief and to other village headmen, according to the prestige of the group he represents. This prestige is determined partly by his historical association with the chief in his past military exploits, partly by the size of his village, and partly by the prestige he has had in other areas. These elements were significant in Yao polity before the advent of the Whites, as we have seen from Duff MacDonald's description. Village headmen then were continually involved in a struggle for power among themselves and against the chief.[1] The struggle for power among village headmen continues to-day though in a changed context. Military power is no longer the object of the competition between them: the struggle for followers has become transmuted into a struggle for tax-payers. In harmony with the new political and economic situation a successful headman is not rewarded by military superiority, but by Government recognition and an official emolument.

At the same time, the chief whose power in the pre-White days resided in his armed forces, nowadays draws on the power of the White Administration to exercise his authority over his village headmen. His position is strengthened by Government decree and he does not hesitate to threaten to use it if necessary. Although the prestige of chiefs is higher than that of any of the village headmen, the difference in prestige between any chief and his most important headman is not very great. They are treated with almost the same deference by the minor village headmen and commoners, and they are referred to by the same term (*mwenye* = chief). The chief or an important village headman

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[1] See Chap. II, p. 34.

The chief or an important village headman
[601] is usually addressed by a kinship term, either *baba* (father) or
643 *ambuje* (master or grandparent). When he is referred to, his
● 622 name is not used. Village headmen are owners or wardens of
554 villages (*asyene misi*) but only those headmen of some standing
178 are referred to as *mwenye*.

Important village headmen, like the chief, are in mystical
643 danger from pollution by death. They cannot come to the hut in
622 which a corpse is lying ; and they cannot eat the chicken which
554 has been brought to them by relatives of the deceased to announce
761 the death. Like the chief too, an important headman may be
buried in a tomb in his village and not in the graveyard.

But an important element in their relationship nowadays is
643 that the Administration will support the chief against a village
622 headman when it comes to a trial of strength, and that a headman
554 these days is precluded by modern conditions from setting up
578 chiefdoms as he did in the old days. Village headmen therefore
must struggle for power against their fellows and the chief within
691 the modern Administrative framework. Some attempts are
made to resist the power of the chief but these are rarely successful.
The dispute between Liwonde and Ndenda illustrates this.

Ndenda was an Nguru headman, who in 1947 had 284 tax-payers under him (Liwonde, the chief, had 186 in his village). Ndenda had come into Liwonde's area before the White invasion and had surrendered with his relative Mlelemba, to Liwonde. The second Liwonde had given him both initiation rights but, unlike his relative, he did not have the right to wear a scarlet headband.

In 1938 or thereabouts, Liwonde decided to move his village site from the Shire River to its present site about half-way up the Great Rift scarp. He sent two of his young men to look for a suitable site, and to plant some mango trees there when they had found one. Ndenda heard of this and sent one of his men to take Liwonde's men into custody. He took their hoes away and then told them to go back to tell the chief they were planting in his (Ndenda's) land. In due course Liwonde moved up to his new site, and asked Ndenda why he had taken the hoes away and whether he owned the country, i.e. was the chief. Ndenda now argued that Mlelemba's ancestors had been given the rights of chieftainship over this area and that the first Mlelemba in the area had given Liwonde some elephant tusks for these rights. Liwonde replied that the chief has a right to tusks and that many had given tusks to him but were not entitled for that reason to rights of chieftainship. Liwonde handled this situation by calling a meeting of the village headmen in the area. They assembled

and the claims of Ndenda were debated. The headmen supported 643
Liwonde in his claim that the tusks were part of the chief's rights 622
and that when Mlelemba had come he had come 'to get fire from the 554
chief'. Liwonde then upbraided Ndenda for imagining that because 578
he had so many followers he was a chief, and fined him 10*s*. for
being insolent. 691

The struggle between Liwonde and Ndenda did not end however. Some years afterwards a man came to Liwonde and said that he wanted to live in his area. This man was a complete stranger and had no relatives there. Liwonde sent him to Ndenda's village. Later while living in the village, this man stole some cloth. He was arrested and Ndenda brought him to the chief saying that the chief was responsible for him. Liwonde told Ndenda that he was being insolent again and that the responsibility must rest with him because the man had married into his village. He ordered Ndenda to pay £1 to compensate the victims of the theft. This Ndenda did but in his view this was tantamount to being chased out of the chief's area. He therefore moved with his children across the boundary northwards into Jalasi's area, and told his unrelated villagers to follow him. They refused to leave Liwonde's area. He was helpless and could do nothing about it. He returned to Liwonde's area a broken man and died shortly afterwards. His eldest son took charge of the village affairs, but so far no successor has been found.

The struggle between Ndenda and Liwonde has some interesting 643
features about it. The strength of the chief in his Govern- 622
ment position is not as evident as it has been in other struggles,
as, for example, between Jalasi and Kalonga, or between Chiwalo 554
and Ntimbuka, in the cases I cited earlier.[1] It appears only 578
indirectly. Ndenda did not appeal to the District Commissioner against the fine as he might have done if he had felt his position to be more secure. The case history also shows how Liwonde ranged his other important headmen, 47 per cent of whom were kinsmen or co-Invaders, around him against Ndenda who was neither. It shows also that Ndenda's reaction to what he felt to be an injustice, typically enough, was to emigrate and to try to injure the chief by reducing his followers. When this failed he was defeated and it was his downfall, for, like a chief, 'a headman without people is nothing'.[2]

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[1] Pp. 86 and 96.

[2] *Mcilambo naga naganakola ŵandu ngawa mcilambo*: 'A chief who has no people is not a chief'—a saying frequently quoted to emphasize the dependence of the chief on his subjects.

CHAPTER V

THE VILLAGE HEADMAN

VILLAGES AS DISCRETE UNITS

622 THE village headman is a key personality in Yao social structure. 621 Viewed as an organization of villages, the social structure may be described in terms of the positioning of village headmen in relation to each other and to the chief. But the village headman is a representative of a corporate group, the village. The position he occupies in the structure as a whole, the rôle he plays in his interaction with other village headmen and the chief, and the prestige that he has in the community as a whole, are all derived from the village of which he is the representative, and in particular from the history of the dominant matrilineage of that village.

I am now considering, of course, all village headmen, however small their villages are, and not only the Administrative village headmen, as in the previous chapter. Each group which sets up a village recognizes one man as the ' owner ' or warden of the village (*asyene musi*). The word ' *musi* ' (pl. *misi*) in Yao, refers primarily to the physical concentration of huts, but it is impossible for the people to separate in their minds the dwellings in a village from the people who inhabit them. In Yao, a deserted village is no longer ' a village '. It is called instead *lisame* (pl. *masame*),[1] a word which refers now not to the village as a unit, but to the collection of deserted and individual huts. The word *musi* or its diminutive form *kamusi* may be applied to a cluster of only four or five huts, or at the other extreme it may be applied to a large concentration of more than 500 huts.[2] The essential point is that the cluster of huts is occupied by a group of kinsmen who are independent of their neighbours. For example, a stranger may see a cluster of huts and ask, ' Whose village is that ? ' The reply may be, ' That is no village, they are only homesteads.'[3]

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[1] From the verb *kusama*—to migrate.

[2] Large complex villages may also be called *msinda*.

[3] *Maŵasa* (sing. *liŵasa*), which I have translated as ' homesteads ', strictly speaking refers to the households set up by married men.

Further enquiries may reveal that this is only a section of a larger 622
village, possibly a hundred or more yards away.

The boundaries of a village may not always be clear. Clusters 621
of huts which are part of one village may be physically nearer
another, but in the minds of the Yao, who see not only the
huts but also the social relationships of the people occupying
them, there is no confusion at all. As a general rule the villages
are fairly compact and clearly demarcated from others, and
even strangers have no difficulty in recognizing the autonomy
of the group which is expressed in many different ways.
MacDonald recorded that formerly a headman performed
a certain amount of ritual which symbolized the unity of
the village.[1] Much of this has fallen away, but the unity
remains.

The ritual surrounding the foundation of a new village bears 622
testimony to its persisting political significance. In this ritual
the unity of the group, against other similar groups, including 621
the village from which it has sprung, is expressed. On first 787
arrival at a new village site the men build grass sheds, beginning
with that of the headman. That night the headman pours a cone
of sacred flour at the root of a tree on the site, and asks the spirits
of his ancestors whether the site is propitious. Early next morning
he examines the cone to see the answer. If a side of the cone
has collapsed it does not augur well and another site is selected.
If the cone is still whole it is taken that the spirits acquiesce, and
permanent huts can be started. The headman then goes into 622
the bush to find medicines[2] which he mixes with groundbeans. 621
That night, with the medicated groundbeans in the hut, the 751
headman has intercourse with his wife. In the morning those
who are not sexually active come to the headman's grass shed 834
to drink some water in which the medicine has been steeped and 372
eat some of the medicated beans with a little porridge, which
the headman's wife has prepared from the sacred flour. This
medicine is called 'the medicine to strengthen the village'
(*mtera wakulimbika musi*). Until then all members of the village
should have been continent but after this sexual relationships may
be resumed. The object of the medicine is to prevent those

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[1] See pp. 31–2.

[2] *Nkulungwa* and *nkuta*, two plants commonly used for protection against *ndaka*. See f.n., p. 112. [824]

622 who are sexually inactive from contracting *ndaka*.[1] At the same
621 time the headman gives each household a piece of the fire which
751 has been newly kindled in the traditional way by rubbing two
sticks together.

834 The mystical danger inherent in the act of setting up a new
372 village is well brought out in the propitiatory prayer and the
abstinence from sexual intercourse. Once again it is the village
headman who must make the offering to his ancestors ; and it is
[833] the village headman who has intercourse with his wife so that the
effluvium from his sexual activity may permeate the medicine in
the hut and so protect the villagers from *ndaka*. Lastly, it is
very important that the whole village cooks and is warmed by
one fire. 'We are of one fire' expresses the common origin of
two villages ; though in fact every time a new village is founded
a new fire should be kindled. To bring fire from the village of
origin is to bring sorcery, since the Yao believe that sorcery can
operate between persons closely linked by kinship only. To have
one's own fire is to be autonomous from other groups.

The Burdens and Rewards of Headmanship

622 MacDonald had the perspicuity to see not only that the village
554 headman was the representative of a corporate group and
that he represented this group to outsiders, but also that he
represented external authority to his villagers. The village
[769] headman who in his person stood for the unity of the group,
performed certain ritual acts which emphasized this, such as
praying to the village ancestors. In spite of the decline of the
ritual his position is still regarded as exceptional. Much, however,
depends on the rank of the village headman. There may not be
much difference in ritual observances and mystical dangers
between a headman who has in his charge a meagre three or
four huts, and a commoner. In the larger and more important

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[753] [1] This is one of the most important mystical concepts of the Yao. I have
described this condition and its implications more fully in *Marriage among the
Machinga Yao of Southern Nyasaland* (R.-L.I. Paper), forthcoming. Briefly it is
a disease characterized by oedema which affects those who are sexually inactive
when they are suddenly brought into contact with a person, or an object which
he has touched, after having intercourse. The people most affected are the
[833] young and the old, i.e. those who cannot have sexual intercourse. Those who
are capable of intercourse are expected to have ritual intercourse with a stranger,
and so fortify themselves against this dread disease.

622 554 villages, however, the headman's activities may be as circumscribed by ritual prohibitions as the chief's are.

622 787 578 482 The village headman is subject not only to mystical dangers but also to other dangers deriving from his position of authority. It is significant that villagers never go to a diviner to find out the cause of a village headman's death. When I asked informants why this was so, they said, 'Well, what's the use of it? He has enemies on all sides in the village who are trying to kill him with their magic.' In harmony with this view of village headmanship, the symbolic object which represents the village headman in the diviners' gourds I have seen, is a small ring of grass (*singwa*), a copy of the grass cushion women place on their heads when they are carrying loads. This symbolizes the ring of enemies which surrounds the village headman. The saying 'the tortoise defecates on the one who carries it',[1] usually applied to chieftainship, applies equally well to a village headman.

622 651 431 A village headman may expect little material benefit from his position of authority. If he is an Administrative village headman he may be paid a small annuity of *5s.* or *10s.*[2] Returning labour migrants may give him a blanket or a military overcoat, or perhaps a few shillings, but this is not usual. If he is not a strict Moslem he will almost certainly be given a pot of beer from every brewing made for sale in the local 'club house'. On the other hand, if an important stranger, particularly a White official, arrives in the village he feels he must give his guest a chicken. It is mannerly to reciprocate with another gift, but not all Whites know this, or, if they do, do not observe it. In particular if the chief comes to his village, he will be expected to entertain him and here can expect no recompense—the chief 'eats from his country'.

622 554 The Yao know that the position of headman is no sinecure. Frequently the one chosen to succeed refuses to accept the position, especially if he is well placed in employment. It is significant that the word for an heir is *litegwa*[3]—the one who is trapped. An

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[1] *Ngoŋo jikanyela msyene iwajigele.*

[2] Until recently this was true. As I was leaving the field in 1949, I heard that the Administration had decided to abandon this system in favour of one in which only group headmen would be remunerated.

[3] Substantive form of the passive of the verb *kutega*—to set a trap as for animals. This word is not widely known, especially among the younger Yao.

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PLATE V

Village headman, Nyenje, at his installation ceremony. He is not entitled to wear a scarlet headband but wears a coloured one instead. On his right sits his sister, on his left his wives, adopting the posture correct for an initiand—head bowed, eyes downcast, hands in the lap. A villager is dropping a penny into the cloth at the headman's feet while the headman's representative collects the pennies.

(July 1947)

[facing p.114]

622 554 heir has to balance up the difficulties inherent in his position of leadership, including his fear of sorcery, with its honour and rank.

Commoners respect village headmen in the same way as minor headmen respect their superiors. Headmen of important villages are given a special greeting by the commoners; they usually wear a distinguishing headdress; they sit on a mat alone or on a chair, while the commoners sit on the floor; they walk in front of commoners on the road; they sit under the chief's verandah while the commoners sit in the sun; and they are buried in the village, while the unimportant commoners are buried in the graveyard.

Outside their villages too they are accorded deference. It is not only their own villagers who must treat them in this way: all commoners must do so. They are accepted by the chief as important men and are treated as such.

THE HEADMAN'S INSTALLATION CEREMONY

622 The peculiar position of the village headman is brought out particularly in the installation ceremonies. When a headman dies his heir should not assume the name until he has been formally installed. This is expressed as 'to enter the name' (*kwinjila lina*). All installation ceremonies are similar and there are only minor variations from one ceremony to another. The following is a description of a succession ceremony recounted to me by an informant. It concerns the succession to headmanship of Cimombo, a headman of some rank in Nyambi's area. Cimombo had a village of 30 tax-payers, wore a scarlet headband, and had the right to hold a girls' but not a boys' initiation ceremony.

Some time had passed since the death of Cimombo, and his heir, though commonly known by that name, had not been officially installed. Eventually he grew impatient and went to his perpetual[1] elder brother Kaukutu of Nyambi's area, who also wore a scarlet headband, and told him that he was going to Cholo to find work. Kaukutu told him that he might visit the men at Cholo but he himself must not enter employment there. The heir left for Cholo. As soon as he had gone Kaukutu collected his relatives and discussed the succession. They decided to get

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[1] The relationship between some personalities in the social structure, originally kinsmen, becomes fixed and is perpetuated by their successors. See p. 122.

Nyambi's formal permission to install the heir as Cimombo. 622 Nyambi told them to start preparing malt for the 'beer of succession' and to tell him when it was ready. Kaukutu then sent a man to Cholo on a bicycle to call Cimombo back to the village. One Tuesday, the day after Cimombo returned, Kaukutu reported to Nyambi, who told him to tell the women to prepare the beer, since the installation ceremony would take place on Saturday. Nyambi sent his perpetual sons Makoka and Ncimba to officiate on his behalf. These two men were important village headmen, Makoka having the right to wear a scarlet headband though Ncimba had not.

On Thursday, Makoka and Ncimbo came to a place about three miles from the village. They had four women with them, one of whom carried a sacred basket (*ciselo cambepesi*). Ncimbo sent a message to Kaukutu to say that they were waiting, and he told the heir that he was wanted along the road where a meeting was being held. When the women saw Kaukutu and the heir coming to the place where Makoka and Ncimbo were waiting, they ran to hide in the bush. The heir sat down under a mango tree and Makoka went up to him and begged for some snuff. Before he had time to take the snuff bottle out of his pocket, the women came out of the bush, Makoka got up and struck the heir on the forehead with his fist, knocking him to the ground, took some flour from the sacrifice basket and sprinkled it on the heir, shouting, 'This is Cimombo—he is risen from the dead!'[1] They put him in a hammock and carried him back to his hut in the village amidst wild exultation. They put him on his bed and made him stay there. Later, Mkoka and Ncimbo came in and started to deliver a series of homilies on his position as village headman.[2] They pointed out that from that day he was a chief (*mwenye*), a headman who had the right to wear a scarlet headband (*acimweni shambendera*). [784] Thenceforth, he was not to go to funerals, or at least not into the hut in which a corpse was lying. If his child were to die while he was in the hut he must not move until other people had come in. It was only when a headman of similar rank died that he might go into the hut. They advised him particularly that he would have to look after his village and told him that he should

[1] *Ce Cimombo [illegible]—[illegible] [illegible].*

[2] *Kwenda miyango*—to teach the customs.

● 622 neglect neither his sorority-group nor the husbands in his village,[1] that his sorority-group and his village were his garden and he must take care of the young plants in it. The husbands were the watchmen who look after the women in the village. A headman dare not take sides or be unfair, nor must he talk behind people's backs. He must take care to settle differences amicably by discussion at meetings. They advised him not to pay too much attention to his wives who may have quarrelled with his sisters and tell him that they have been insulting him. When he hears a report like that he may be unfair to his sisters and people will say that he has broken his village through listening to nonsense. This sort of instruction went on through the night.

On Friday when the beer was brewed, Mlamba and Mbalwe,
[344] both headmen and perpetual sons of Nyambi, came to the village
and told the men to build a small grass shed for the successor to
sit in. This the men did, and the women were told to plaster it
and clean the huts out for the strangers who would be coming
to the ceremony. On Saturday morning before cockcrow,
Makoka and Ncimba got up and told the women to cook a big
pot of porridge because they were taking Cimombo to bathe and
[415] when they returned they would want to find porridge ready.
Makoka took some medicine called *mkulumo* in a bark container
[751] (*likungwa*) into the toilet enclosure. He put the medicine into
two jars of water and told Cimombo to wash himself in it daily
as he was an important headman, and it would strengthen his
622 body.[2] After Cimombo had washed he went back into the hut
where a mat was spread on the floor and on it were a dish of
266 porridge and three dishes of relish. Makoka and Ncimbo told
him to take a little porridge, dip it into one of the relishes—whichever
he chose—and eat it. Cimombo did so. They did not
tell him that one of the dishes contained human flesh.[3] When
he tried the dish of human flesh he vomited and all the villagers
cried with joy, saying that he was a good chief because he had

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[1] *Mbumba jao ni akamwini wao*—the meaning and significance of this in the village context is explained on p. 183.

[2] This is a euphemism for protective medicine against sorcery.

[3] The immediate question is: Where did the human flesh come from? No informant could tell me and I am inclined to believe that one of the dishes is 'ritually' made into human flesh for this ceremony. This special ceremony was always spoken about as if it were secret, especially from White people.

vomited human flesh.[1] They said that they had a strong head- 622 266 man and that they could trust him; he was a good headman without witchcraft. If he had been a sorcerer they would have kept scolding him until the next morning.

About two hours after sunrise the people gathered and started 622 dancing. At about this time Cimombo was brought out of the 527 hut and put in the grass shed which had been built for the occasion. This was the climax of the ceremony.[2] He sat on a chair in the grass shed with one of his two wives on either side. Makoka [533] then started a chant, exhorting the visitors to come to throw pennies at Cimombo's feet. Some of the people there made [537] speeches about the type of behaviour they would expect from him. Then Nyambi arrived from the court village in a ricksha. [493] When the noise had subsided he told the people that if they disobeyed Cimombo it meant that they disobeyed the chief. He emphasized the importance of the rank of the new headman. After the speech he presented 12*s.* to Cimombo which was received on his behalf by Ncimbo. Nyambi then left and the ceremony was over, but the people remained to dance and drink beer.

This description of the procedure following the 'coming out 622 of the hut' is somewhat sketchy. The interaction of the head- 516 man and his villagers on this formal and ceremonial occasion is of great interest and importance. During the entire ceremony the headman adopts the pose which is appropriate for any Yao initiand. His hands are on his lap or on the arms of the chair and his head is bowed forward with eyes downcast. He neither speaks nor moves. His attendants, when necessary, wipe the sweat off his face or chase away the flies. The other occupants of the mat, who may be his wives, and sometimes his heir, adopt similar postures. In contrast to this, is the behaviour of the [201] villagers who run about shouting wildly, the men discharging muzzle-loading guns, and women ululating in the typical Central African way.

Before the new headman comes out of the hut his mentors 622

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[1] This is a test based on the witchlore of the Yao, who believe that sorcerers [754] kill relatives with magic and then share out the flesh of their victims with fellow-sorcerers in ghoulish feasts.

[2] Called the 'coming out from the hut' (*kukopoka nyumba*). It is of course the first public appearance of the headman in his newly assumed status.

622 impress on him the difficulty of his position, and when he is taken outside some of this is repeated in public. At Nkacelenga's installation ceremony in December 1946, which I attended, the following incidents took place. Shortly after he was taken out 622 of the hut, Cigunda, one of the officiating headmen, said: 537 'Younger brothers of Nkacelenga, are you happy that Kambiri[1] has an elder brother? You women, have you cooked beer so that you can have your village headman?' In reply the men and women clapped their hands and a few came forward to throw some coppers into a cloth at Nkacelenga's feet. Cigunda went on to say, 'From to-day no woman will be impudent to the chief, because you are all of the same womb. All you men listen, only this man is your village headman!' Cigunda now turned to Nkacelenga who did not change his posture in the least. 'You village headman Nkacelenga, don't listen to what your wife says, because she will fight with your sisters and tell you that they have been cursing you. You should make enquiries when you have heard these things because you are a big man [i.e. important headman]. From to-day onwards you are a big man. Every person will be trying to spoil your name by saying that you are a bad man. You need to be patient and easy-going.' Turning to the public, Cigunda said, 'Even you husbands [*akamwini*] do not listen to what your wives say if they try to traduce the village headman, because some husbands can break the village.' Thereupon one husband got up feeling around for a penny, found he did not have one, and with much ostentation borrowed one from a fellow-husband sitting next to him. He then came forward to where Nkacelenga was sitting and said, 'You say some husbands can break a village. Is that true? But husbands build the villages? They can't break the villages.' Then very deliberately he threw the penny into the cloth at the headman's feet and went back to his seat. His speech was greeted with acclamation from the husbands. Cigunda said nothing after that and the ceremony was over.

In September 1948, during the installation ceremony of Mapata, 622 one of Kawinga's less important headmen in the northern 533 part of his area, the significance of the relationship of the headman to his relatives for the continuation of the village as a whole, was brought out more clearly. After the headman was

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[1] A perpetual brother of Nkacelenga.

brought out of the hut, as always, songs were sung and speeches 622
were made. One of the songs was : 'A tree when it grows, 533
grows with its branches.'[1] This is a reference to the dependence of the village headman upon the increase of his relatives for an increase in his rank. The Yao compare kinship with a tree, the [602] component segments of the maximal lineage (the tree) being the branches. Then one of the officiating headmen mentioned that there were many sisters' sons of the old Mapata but that Kawinga and Chiwalo had selected the one on the chair to be the headman. He then exhorted the others neither to be jealous nor to resort to sorcery, but to exalt the name[2] that it might live long. This was followed by a song which introduced a second theme, 'A husband however rich he becomes here, cannot climb high.'[3] This song emphasizes that the uxorilocal husbands of the village [591] can never achieve rank outside their own matrilineal villages however rich they are. The officiating headman then went on to say that some women rebuke their husbands when they speak subversively, but others side with them against the village headman. He told the husbands and women that they were wrong to do this and that they must desist. After this followed a public 622
rebuke of the village as a whole. One of the younger brothers 537
of the new headman pointed out that when the mother of the previous Mapata had died she had been buried in the graveyard and not in the village. He rebuked the villagers and told them that, when the present chief died, he should be buried in the village. A man who had been charged with neglect by his wife (his cross-cousin) paid the headman the compensation which he had refused to pay to her. One of the headmen then exhorted the villagers to respect their headman; to send someone to accompany him on his journeys to see to his wants; never to allow the headman to carry a gift he had been given, and so on. The ceremony ended when Kapaloma, who was representing the chief, hinted that Mapata might be allowed to wear a scarlet headband in the near future.

Village headmen represented the chief at Nkacelenga's and 622

[1] *Mtera pookukula ukwete ŵanyambi.*

[2] *Kwesya lina*—to cause the name to climb.

[3] *Tonde, tonde, nkamwini nasicila mano ngakwela iai.* Tonde is the word for billy goat and its use here emphasizes the procreative functions of the husband in the village.

622 Mapata's installation ceremonies. When an important headman succeeds, however, the chief himself usually makes a short appearance and talks to the people. When Nyenje was installed in July 1947, Kawinga attended. Nyenje has the same clan-name as Kawinga and is an Invader. In 1947, he had 109 tax-payers under him; he held rights to both initiation ceremonies, but he did not have the right to wear the scarlet headband. Kawinga arrived at 11.18 a.m. before Nyenje had come out of the hut and he went straight to it and entered. He emerged at 11.45 and sat on a chair under a drying stand. Kangomba, his head *nduna*, came and sat with him. In the meantime the new headman was brought outside and seated on a chair. Sitting on either side of him on the mat on which his chair was placed, were his two wives. Nsanama,[1] a minor village headman of the same clan-name as Nyenje, officiated. The penny-giving now started. 622 537 At 12.10 Kawinga got up and walked over to the crowd, and silenced them with a sharp whistle. They gathered round to hear his speech. He pointed out that the dispute about the succession to their headmanship had been going on for three or four years and that there had been two candidates, one of whom he had selected as successor because he knew he would be sensible and wise, and would look after his people in the village and in the smaller villages under him. He said that he had recommended this man to the District Commissioner who, with the Governor's sanction, had supported him. He did not therefore want to hear that the man had fallen ill; he dealt strictly with sorcerers. He said that respect started with the relatives: brothers and sisters, the husbands and the boys and girls must [551] also respect 'the chief'. They must not mention his name but refer to him as 'the chief'. Kawinga went on to say that some husbands were evil and could split a village like this one, by telling lies to the headman and falsely advising the headman that his sisters were talking behind his back and insulting him. When he hears this he may break the village by ill-treating his relatives, thereby causing them to migrate and leave him all alone. Kawinga told the people not to go talking in other villages about the man who was in the chair; that sort of behaviour only led to sorcery. Finally, he warned them to help the headman in obeying the instructions of the White people who

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[1] Not Kawinga's relative of the same name.

came to the village and in accommodating strangers while he 622 was away. He told them that disputes were to be referred to the 537 headman immediately. Turning to the new headman he said he had to report anything unusual that occurred in the village, and that he was authorized to arbitrate in small cases in his and surrounding villages.

Kawinga then left the centre of the crowd and went back to where he had been sitting. Then an officiating headman, addressing particularly the women, said, 'Only a few months ago there was a quarrel between the present chief and his elder sisters. These women ran away to Malemia's area in Zomba district without reporting the matter to anyone. This must stop. With effect from to-day any troubles must be brought to the headman without delay: he will settle them. A tree cannot grow without branches and a headman or a chief cannot be known without his people's respect. Do not behave as children. This man cannot do things alone: he must have your help. We leave him in your hands and we do not want to hear about any more trouble. Follow all the instructions the chief has given you.' He took his leave and Nyenje was taken back inside the hut. The people now dispersed to where there was beer and dancing.

THE STRUCTURAL REINCARNATION OF VILLAGE HEADMEN AND PERPETUAL RELATIONSHIPS

There appear to be a number of significant aspects of the in- 622 stallation ceremonies. First, there is the ritual death and rebirth of the village headman. 829 The heir is 'killed' by a blow with the fist on the forehead, but is reborn the headman. The Yao do not believe that the spirit of the headman is inherited by the heir;[1] he has only eaten the name.[2] But socially he is born again and, [587 logically consistent with this idea, he takes the wives of his 428] predecessor without further marriage negotiation. He also takes over the property of the dead man, his clothes and his huts.

But this structural reincarnation of the headman has the im- 622 portant implication that the headman is immortal. He shares 829 this characteristic with the group of which he is the leader. When 601

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[1] As the Bemba do. A. I. Richards, 'Mother-right among the Central Bantu' in E. E. Evans-Pritchard and others, *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, Kegan Paul (London, 1933).

[2] *Kulya lina* is a synonym for succeeding to headmanship.

622 a village dies, so then does the headman die.[1] In his rebirth,
he occupies the status that his predecessor held before he died,
829 in both the kinship system and the political structure.[2] His
601 mother's brother's children whom he formerly called 'cross-cousin' he now calls 'my children'. His mother's younger brothers whom he previously called *akwelume* (mother's brothers), he now calls 'my younger brothers' (*apwanga*), and so on. By the extension of this principle, an heir succeeds not only to the status of his mother's brother but also to that of the first of his name. Cigwaja VI, for example, calls the descendants of his mother's mother's mother's brother (Cigwaja IV) 'children'. In fact, he calls the children of any Cigwaja 'my children'.

Within the political field the same principle is used in establishing what we may call 'perpetual relationships'.[3] There are some village headmen who express their relationships to each other or to the chief by a kinship term. The headman Majaja, for example, is the 'son' of Nyambi. In fact, the first Majaja to establish a village was the son of the second Nyambi. The present Majaja is the third incumbent and three Nyambis have died since Nyambi II. Nevertheless, by positional succession both of the present incumbents are translated to the formative phase in their relationships, which is thus perpetuated to-day, and will be, in their view, for ever. The present Liwonde calls Kawinga 'elder brother'. Kawinga is in fact his mother's mother's mother's sister's son. The first Liwonde was the first Kawinga's younger brother. They invaded Nyasaland together. At this significant point in their history their relationship became fixed and then perpetuated in the political structure. This relationship, though phrased in a kinship term and moulded to some extent by the norms of kinship behaviour appropriate to the term used, is in reality political, for it fixes the relative positions of two villages through their headmen.

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[1] Sometimes after a village has broken up and the name has not been heard of for some years, some survivor revives it and resuscitates the village.

[2] Dr. Richards calls this 'positional succession'. See 'Some Types of Family Structure amongst the Central Bantu' in A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde (eds.), *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, Oxford University Press for the International African Institute (London, 1950), 224.

[3] This term was suggested by Dr. I. Cunnison's use of it for a similar practice among the peoples of the Luapula Valley. See his *Local Organization on the Luapula Valley*.

THE RÔLE OF THE CHIEF IN HEADMAN'S INSTALLATION CEREMONIES

The second significant aspect is the importance of the chief in the installation ceremony. 643 In each ceremony the chief has to give his formal consent to the succession. Note that the 622 chief is approached by one of the headman's relatives, so that at this level, in spite of Kawinga's statement,[1] the succession dispute is over and the heir is decided upon. The chief's formal consent, his formal fixing of the date of installation, his personal appearance or the appearance of his representative, and his giving of the gift, all serve to set his official seal on the installation and to recognize its political significance.

The chief recognizes the leader of the group, both in his actions and his words. He also sees in the headman his representative, as when Nyambi said, 'When you disobey the headman you disobey me,' or when Kawinga said, 'Nyenje, you are responsible to report to me any unusual thing which occurs in your village here.'

When a chief comes into a village it is the village headman who [574] entertains him. I was told that if the headman or his representative were away, the chief would be given no hospitality at all, because the villagers only entertain him through their representative, the village headman. Though the chief himself may not frequently visit villages, his representatives are constantly coming and going on his errands. Where affairs [644] of day-to-day administration of the chiefdom are concerned these representatives are usually the court messengers, who may be paid from Native Authority funds or from the chief's private funds. The chief's representative in his tribal capacity, however, is usually his *nduna*, but it may be practically any village headman whom the chief selects. For example, he may send his *nduna* or one of his satellites as his representative to a *mapeto*.[2] He sometimes sends his representative as a referee to divinations and to chicken poison-ordeals following accusations

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[1] Kawinga had a say in Nyenje's succession because he was a clan-relative. I have evidence that some lobbying had been going on because the successor that Kawinga chose was not chosen by Kawinga's relatives.

[2] A meeting held shortly after a funeral to decide whether death has been caused by sorcery or is due to natural causes.

643 of sorcery, but the representative takes no part in the proceedings
622 at all; he is outside them and is there merely to see that affairs are conducted fairly.

THE VALUE ATTACHED TO THE UNITED VILLAGE

622 621 The third aspect, the dominant theme in all speeches, is the emphasis on the position of the headman as a leader of a corporate group, and his duty to maintain its unity. The chief and the officiating headmen warn the successor about the possibility of conflict in the village. They advise him to settle differences at once lest these should lead to a split in the village. [591] They also warn him that his wife's relationships with her sisters-in-law, living as she is, virilocally,[1] are a danger point and may lead to trouble. The danger from the 'husbands' who are members of other villages and whose loyalties do not lie directly with the new headman is made manifest to him. At Nyenje's ceremony the officiating headman remonstrated with Nyenje's sisters because some had left the village without giving him an opportunity to settle their differences. The frequent references to the danger of sorcery are also references to the fear of the breakdown of the village. The villagers are exhorted to respect the headman and to be obedient to him for the general welfare of the group as a whole. Regularly the image of the tree and its branches is invoked, and it is made clear that the headman is dependent on his people for his rank and status, and they on him for their unity.

621 166 627 The disintegration of a village in Yao eyes is a sad affair and the disruptive forces in it must be very strong before a section leaves it. People who want to leave a village are usually remonstrated with and told not to 'break' it. In the frequent conflicts between the headmen and their younger brothers the arbitrators usually try their utmost to prevent a migration. They always award compensation to the injured party and tell the disputants to live in peace, and not to leave the village. Frequently, however, the leader of the dissident group prefers to refuse the compensation money, which is often as much as £6 or £7, and

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[1] i.e. living with her husband's kin. I use 'virilocal' and 'uxorilocal' in preference to the older but ambiguous terms 'patrilocal' and 'matrilocal'. See Richards, 'Some Types of Family Structure amongst the Central Bantu', 208–9.

621 his mother was ill and had gone with Lupunje's younger brother to
626 the diviner to find out the cause of the illness. The diviner indicated
753 that Lupunje thought that Kalambo was not showing him the proper
respect. Lupunje knew that his sisters had lost their value in the lineage since they had stopped bearing children, whereas Kalambo's sisters were still reproducing. His malice had caused the woman's illness. When Kalambo got home he asked his mother's brother to blow water out of his mouth [1] and help him to prepare some medicine for the sick woman. This Lupunje did and the woman recovered immediately.

Shortly afterwards Kalambo remonstrated with his mother's brother for causing the illness of his sister, but Lupunje said that he had no control over it: the spirits had brought it on her. Kalambo knew that he could do nothing and abandoned the idea of building his own village. He knew that there was bound to be more illness if he carried on with his plan.

Clearly the belief in the mystical powers of the ancestors or of
182 sorcery is a force which prevents sections from breaking away
621 from the village. A break follows only when opposition within
626 the village has reached sufficient pitch to force one of the sections
to take the risk of illness, rather than to continue living in the village. Sometimes the dissident group comes back because further deaths at their new village site convince them that their action was wrong.[2]

EFFECTS OF THE HEADMAN'S PERSONALITY

● 622 Whether a village maintains its unity or not, depends very
largely on the personality of the headman. This is why the
officiating headmen and others at the installation ceremonies are
so insistent that cases should be settled quickly. The main duty
of a headman is to maintain harmonious relationships within
his village and to see to the welfare of its members. All severe
[787] illnesses are immediately reported to him, and so are the results
of all divinations. He usually sends his representative to divina-
[764] tions concerning kinsmen not related to him matrilineally. He
is immediately notified of all deaths and he organizes the funeral
rites. Squabbles are brought to him for arbitration and even
622 where squabbles are settled by kinsmen in the village, usually the
692 headman is formally told of them. Frequently marriage diffi-

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[1] An act which recants malice. See Chap. VI, p. 139.

[2] See the case history in Chap. VI, p. 153.

culties are settled by the marriage sureties[1] who only report to 622
him after the affair is settled. In disputes of unusual gravity, 692
the headman may call in unrelated persons[2] to arbitrate, but he himself must be present.

His own behaviour is expected to be exemplary. Any 622
deviation from the norm is likely to be strictly censured, not 577
only by his own villagers, but also by other village headmen, 558
who may say, 'Important men do not behave in this way.' 684
A man who had an argument with his sister's son was told this. He had taken the dispute to a neighbouring headman who decided against the village headman and rebuked him for behaving in a way not consonant with his position. Village headmen should be above squabbling with their villagers. A village headman who was also a leech had virtually raped a woman whom he was treating. He tried to maintain this was part of the treatment. Her matrilineal relatives reported the matter to the headman of her village and he brought the errant headman in front of the chief who said, 'You are wrong to do this when you are an important man. You are a big man and you act as a commoner does. You ought to be able to show the commoners how to behave.' He was made to pay a compensation of £2 10*s*. and fined 10*s*. Had he been a commoner he would have been made to pay a compensation of only 30*s*.

The ultimate sanction to which all headmen are subject, is that 622
their people will leave them if they behave badly. This was 558
the fate of Cikumba.

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In 1944 Cikumba had a village of about 30 huts. The son of the 166
first Cikumba, Meya, had two wives who were living virilocally in Cikumba's village. Meya had enlisted in the army. While he was away, Cikumba, the village headman who was Meya's father's sister's son (though he called him 'father' because of positional succession), started taking Meya's two wives to beer drinks. Meya's sister one day asked Cikumba about his behaviour, but he only said that Meya could not do anything as he was far away. Things had gone too far, however, when one morning he was seen coming out of the

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[1] The representative of a spouse in all affairs arising from conjugal relationships. They are usually senior matrilineal relatives. See Chap. VI, pp. 176–7. Their rôle is discussed fully in *Marriage among the Machinga Yao of Southern Nyasaland*.

[2] *Mundu juampambali*, i.e. a person from outside.

622 hut of one of Meya's wives. Meya's sister wrote a letter to tell him
558 of this and he replied that he could do nothing until he returned.
837 In 1946, Meya returned to be demobilized. The third night after his
166 return he questioned his wives about their fidelity during his absence.
They at first held out against him but before long he intimidated them into admitting that they had slept with the village headman. Meya now went to complain to Mapata, who was Cikumba's perpetual mother's brother, and he said that he would come to the village the next day.

When Mapata came he confronted Cikumba with the accusation. Cikumba denied it until Mapata called the women. When they confessed Cikumba was forced to admit his guilt. Mapata now decided to call in an arbitrator, Isa, an important but unrelated headman who lived close at hand. Isa said he would come the following day when the matter could be thrashed out. When Isa and Mapata came they asked the women about the affair in public. They admitted the charge and Cikumba did not deny it. Isa then remonstrated with him for being a bad man and said that he was ashamed to hear about it. Cikumba had to pay £6 10s. to the injured man, Meya, who, however, refused to take it. He argued that Cikumba ought to have behaved as a father to him. But Cikumba had not. He, Meya, could not remain living in the village because his wives would be as Cikumba's wives. Isa said that he could not object because Cikumba had caused the trouble and had broken the village himself. How could he complain? Meya took two-thirds of the huts in the village away with him.

THE HEADMAN AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF A CORPORATE GROUP

622 The headman is not only responsible for keeping the peace
689 between the members of his village, but he is also supposed to
control his members in their relationships with other villages. If members take corporate action against other villages, even if they do so without the consent of the headman, the chief will consider the village headman responsible. This was brought out clearly in the relationships between Cikoja, Mapata and Masimbo in Chiwalo's section.

622 Cikoja and Mapata are two of the more important headmen in
Chiwalo's section. Masimbo is a minor village headman who lives
689 in Mapata's village area. The quarrel arose over the question of
423 fishing rights in a small pool lying between the two main villages.
226 This pool was excavated by Cikoja and his villagers in 1924 during

a severe drought, and he claimed the rights over it. One day in 1930, 622
some boys from Mapata village came down to the pool with fish-poison. 689
At about noon some boys from Cikoja's village arrived with
their traps. When they saw the Mapata boys using fish-poison they 423
told them to desist and tried to take away the fish. This led to a fight 226
in which knives were drawn. One of Cikoja's boys ran back to tell him, and in anger he came down to the pool with some adults. The Mapata boys now ran back to Masimbo who immediately assembled some men and came to the assistance of the Mapata boys. The two groups joined battle immediately and there were casualties on both sides. Mapata heard about this and came running down to separate them.

The next morning they took the dispute to Chiwalo. He started 622
by asking why Mapata had used fish-poison in someone else's pool 689
without permission. Mapata replied that he did not know that his
boys had gone down there. He said that Masimbo had told him 423
about the conflict and that he had gone down to stop it. He was not aware of it before. Chiwalo now turned to Masimbo and said, 'Masimbo, you are in the wrong. You have caused the children to suffer. You went to make war because of your children. The people of Mapata, they are in the wrong because they did not report to the owner of the pool.'

When Cikoja was asked if he had anything to say he only replied that he was ashamed of what had happened because he was the first in the area, and until then they had been friends. The conflict had arisen because the children had done something which they did not know was wrong.

Chiwalo ordered Masimbo to pay 5*s.* and Mapata 6*s.* to Cikoja. He then told Cikoja that he should brew some beer and share it with the other two villages so that friendship might be restored and the children might go from village to village without fear. The chief's instructions were carried out and normal amicable relationships were re-established.

The way in which the villages acted as corporate groups is well 622
illustrated by this incident. The responsibility of the village 689
headmen for the activity of their members also emerges. The chief found Masimbo in the wrong for causing the fight, but he also fined Mapata because his boys had used fish-poison. The fines were paid by the village headmen, Masimbo and Mapata, to the village headman Cikoja, for they are the representatives of the corporate groups under them.

In no other field of village relationships is the corporate 621 423

621 423 identity of villages more clearly seen than in the arguments that arise over rights over waterholes. These are usually dug next to a stream or a marsh, or in some other place where the water will percolate into them. The physical labour of digging a waterhole establishes the rights to it, and a village retains these rights if at some time in the past any of its members had dug it.

621 423 685 In normal years, and of course during the rainy season, there is enough water for all and no friction arises, but in drought years difficulties arise. Friction between Nampeya and Cikuwita arose in this way in 1933.

622 During the dry season the waterholes that were normally used were drying up and the people of Nampeya decided to open up a disused one. When Cikuwita's people saw Nampeya's people using it they came to use it too. Nampeya's women saw this and told the other people they had no right to use the waterhole. Words passed between them and eventually there was a tussle between the two groups, during which a waterjar of one of Cikuwita's women was broken. Cikuwita's women said they would take the case up to Ntibwilibwi, a headman of local importance, and when they returned to their village they complained to their headman who took the complaint to Ntibwilibwi. He sent a message to Nampeya to arrange a date on which the dispute might be settled. On that day the members of the two villages gathered at Ntibwilibwi's hut. The dispute was settled amicably: the person who broke the waterjar was ordered to take a chicken and give it to the owner of the jar, and Cikuwita was told to gather his people the next day and make them dig a waterhole of their own.

The villagers in each of these situations had acted with regard to their fellows primarily as members of villages. They had seen themselves as members of corporate groups and had interacted as such. In the dispute in which the jar was broken, the individual responsibility was fixed and compensation awarded, but at the same time the village headman was instructed on behalf of his villagers to make a new well and thereby ensure peace in the future. In all these disputes, however, the headman had appeared as the responsible representative of his village.

CHAPTER VI

THE LINEAGE FRAMEWORK OF VILLAGES

MATRILINEAL KINSHIP

TO outsiders a village appears to be an undifferentiated whole 621
and in interaction with other villages it acts as such. But
within the village, social actions are determined by membership 622
of kinship groups whose genealogical relationships to each other 571
differ from one village to another. The village headman who represents the unity of the village is usually a kinsman of all the villagers, but the links to him are different and diverse. Yet he commands the leadership of the village, not so much by his kinship to the villagers, for a villager may have other mother's brothers and fathers in the village, but by his position in a political structure, where he represents the village to outsiders and to external authority.

Yao social groups are organized on a principle of matrilineal 611
descent but we shall see that, although this is the main principle, it is modified by the general political mould into which villages are forced. We have already seen that, at least in the lines of important headmen, clan-names are inherited from the mother.[1] This is the simplest and most direct way in which matrilineal descent affects social relationships. The principle of matrilineal descent is far more important in organizing the smallest group which acts corporately within the village—the matrilineage.

A significant feature of Yao social structure is that the village 621
organization tends to cut across lineages. In the process of
segmentation of matrilineages, which I shall discuss in detail 613
later, new villages are formed. When this happens the dissident kin usually set up their homesteads a good distance from the original or parent village. The links between different sections of the same matrilineage, therefore, tend to become lost, and the new village, conscious of its own identity and unity, gradually loses its links with the parent village. The general structural relationship between the villages as wholes, and their headmen as their representatives, is fixed at the time when the division takes place, and this is remembered. But the actual genealogical

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[1] See Chap. III, p. 71.

Table XXV sets out the disposition of the adult survivors of 613
this matrilineage. 621

TABLE XXV

RELATIONSHIP OF ADULT SURVIVORS: ALI KASUNKA VILLAGE

Relationship to Founder	In Village	Married out	Labour Migrants	Total
D	—	—	—	—
S	—	—	—	—
DD	3	—	1	4
DS	1	—	—	1
DDD	4	1	1	6
DDS	1	4	2	7
Females	7	1	2	10
Males	2	4	2	8

In this hamlet Ali Kasunka is both village headman and the 613
senior male member of the matrilineage. He brought the village 621
into Chiwalo's area and he had the responsibility for the welfare 622
of its members. He has to arbitrate in the disputes that arise
within the village and he must at least appear at arbitrations
where the members of his village have come into conflict with
outsiders.

THE CONFLICT OF MALE AUTHORITY AND UXORILOCALITY

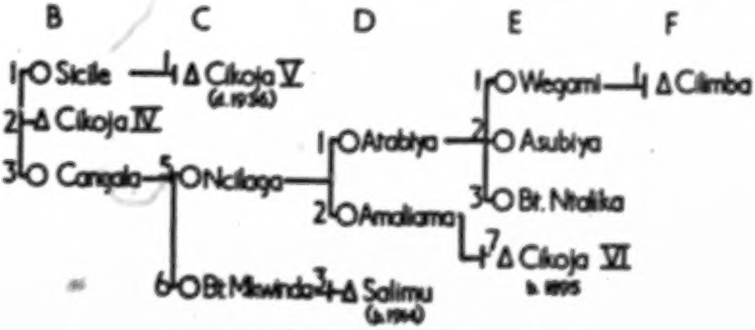
Although descent is matrilineal, authority still rests with the 562
men. The senior man by generation and age is the leader of 591
the matrilineage. It is true that there are a number of small 613
hamlets under women. Biti Nkula village is one, Biti Cimeta is another. But even for these villages there is usually a man who can be called in to handle the affairs of the village. He may be a classificatory brother of the village headwoman, or he may be her own son if he is old enough. For example, in Biti Nkula's village, it is her own son Adam who goes to the divinations and finds the necessary medicine when people fall ill. He also attends the court cases involving a member of the village. Adam is married to a woman in Ndiwagani's village about three-quarters of a mile away from his home and he is therefore easily

While the succession rule may indicate someone as having the
613 best claim to a headmanship or chieftainship, it does not ensure
622 that he will succeed. Succession to headmanship is not merely
562 a matter of assuming control over the matrilineal relatives of the headman. It is also taking command of the whole village as an entity in a political structure and keeping it together as a functioning whole. The village as a whole, as well as the perpetual senior relatives, has a say in the selection of the new headman, and they select the man who is likely to be the most suitable for the position. Here, as in most affairs, the women have an important say. When they consider his suit the village members discuss in particular the ability of the prospective headman to hold the village together. If he is unsuitable they may cite occasions when he is believed to have used sorcery, or sometimes they merely say that he 'has no mouth'. This means that he is incapable of settling the disputes which arise in the village and therefore is unable to keep peace within it. The attitudes of the villagers to suitors for a name are well brought out in the statements when the Misi name was considered.

There were two uterine nephews, Wadi and Mbulaje, whose claims were about equal though Wadi was the elder. The chief Kawinga sent his representative Kasonga to call for a decision. At a general meeting he asked the villagers whom they wanted. Typically Kasonga's remarks were addressed particularly to the women. There was a division of loyalties. Some said that they wanted Mbulaje because 'he was of good heart, he gave gifts, he laughed and was not bad tempered, and he looked after the people when they were ill'. Kasonga, however, asked the opinion of the women under Mbulaje, and they were apparently dissatisfied with him and supported his opponent. Kasonga therefore announced that the new headman would be Wadi. Mbulaje was dissatisfied with this decision and gathered about him his followers and went off to found a village elsewhere. But the position for Wadi was an uneasy one. He lived in dread of Mbulaje's sorcery. When he was ill just before he died, he accused Mbulaje of putting poison in his beer. After he died Mbulaje brought back the women he had taken away and adopted the attire of the village headman. The people cynically accepted this, saying that he should perhaps take it because if any other should try to be headman he would not enjoy the fruits long before he too was killed. But the women were not satisfied with this arrangement and led by Cilo, the headman's sister's son, migrated. They said, 'We wonder that our chief should have died. The heart of the present chief is not good. Those who will stay with

him will be other people, but for us the bush does not eat a person.'[1] 613
Mbulaje was left with a few personal adherents. My informant assured me that 'He is a most unhappy man to-day because he is 622 ●
forever accused of being the sorcerer who is causing the deaths of his 562
relatives. People are saying that Mbulaje had broken the village because he wanted to be a chief when the people did not want him. The one the people wanted was killed. Nowadays, no one visits him because of his sorcery and the people are frightened of him especially at beer drinks.'

Immaturity disqualifies many prospective village headmen. A 622
headman must be a man of experience and wisdom to take charge 613
of a village. Unfortunately I cannot present quantitative data on 561
the ages when village headmen succeeded to their title, but my impressions are that unless a man is older than about 30 years he will not be considered for the name. Difficulty arises when there is a conflict between the principles of seniority and age. The older women do not always bear sons before their younger sisters, so that sometimes a man from a junior lineage section (*liŵelelyanandi*) may be older than a man from the senior. If the younger, but senior, is, say, over 35 it is likely that, other things being equal, he will take the name, but if not the man from the junior house stands the better chance. This is what has happened in Cikoja village. The position is as follows. When Cikoja IV (B2) died, quite regularly the elder sister's (B1) first-born son (C1) succeeded. But many years elapsed between the birth of



REFERENCE GENEALOGY. CIKOJA VILLAGE.

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[1] *Litinji lipangalye mundu.* In other words, if we go to live in the bush somewhere Mbulaje will not bewitch us. Yao sorcerers are supposed to eat their victims. See p. 117, fn. 1.

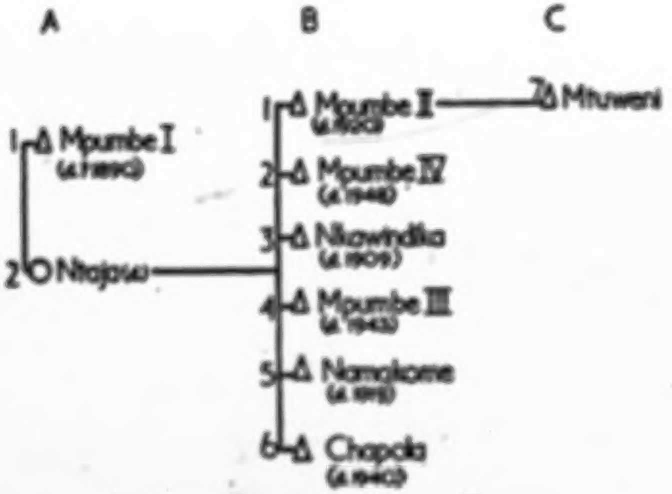
622 the children of Ncilaga (C5) and Bt. Mkwinda (C6). There
613 was a big difference in the ages of these two women. Ncilaga
561 died nearly 30 years ago but Bt. Mkwinda died in 1948. When
Cikoja V (C1) died in 1936, Salimu II (D3), who was born in about 1914, was very much younger than the present Cikoja VI (E7), who was born about 1895. Ncilaga (C5) had no sons, nor had Atabiya (D1), her eldest daughter, so the succession passed to the only son of Amaliama (D2) who was the senior male in that generation. Salimu II, genealogically senior to the present Cikoja, is to be the next headman. He has married a 'cross-cousin' (his mother's mother's brother's daughter's daughter's daughter) and lives in the village. He has already taken over the affairs in one section of the village. The other section has moved out and built about half a mile away with the present Cikoja VI. Note that the junior house—i.e. the descendants of Citeleka (A2)—are completely out of the succession. Wegami's (E1) eldest son, Cilimba (F1), is living virilocally with Cikoja VI in his section of the village and is already opposed to the prospective village headman Salimu. He is likely to be the village headman after Salimu dies and may even push his claim when the present Cikoja VI dies, because Salimu has been accused of sorcery on several occasions.

622 The conflict between sister's sons and mother's brothers at
578 successions has all but fallen away. The people oppose with
604 some vigour the idea that a younger brother should succeed.
Frequently the chief or headman would rather his younger brother succeed, and sometimes indicates him as his successor. Kawinga, for example, has given his pre-succession name of Mlomba to his younger brother and many say this is tantamount to announcing Mlomba as the next Kawinga. This is violently repudiated by most people I have spoken to and they indicate a sister's son as the likely successor. Jalasi too, before he died in 1941, indicated Mbawa, his mother's younger sister's son as the successor, but when it came to the point a sister's son succeeded. The weight of custom is in favour of the sister's sons and usually the succession is fought out among uterine or collateral brothers in the first descending generation.

643 A matrilineal relative is always chosen to be chief in preference
562 to any other, but sometimes there is no heir. Other things being
equal an unsuitable matrilineal relative will be chosen, or a

woman will take the position, before the name will be allowed to pass to a non-matrilineal relative. While a matrilineal relative 643
holds it there is always the chance that a suitable matrilineal heir 562
will be born to a woman of the matrilineage, and will be able to take over the name. In Katuli's area the principle of primogeniture is so strong, I was told that rather than let a succession pass to a junior house, a woman is appointed to 'keep the name'. This happened before the succession of the present Katuli. Nkolojele was the present Katuli's mother, and when his mother's brother died Katuli was too young to become the chief. Instead Nkolojele took the name to prevent it from going to a junior lineage and held it from 1920 to 1936. Nkolojele was thus appointed Principal Headman under the 1912 Ordinance. In 1936, she retired in favour of her son who then took the name Katuli and became chief.

The name is kept within the matrilineage if it is at all possible. 622
The history of the succession of Mpumbe's name is instructive in this context.



REFERENCE GENEALOGY. MPUMBE VILLAGE.

Mpumbe, it will be remembered,[1] came from Jalasi's area to Kawinga's after the White attack on Jalasi in Mangoche. The genealogical summary sets out the relevant data.

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[1] See p. 39.

622 Mpumbe I (A1) died in Jalasi's area before the European attack in 1896. His sister's son (B1) succeeded. When he died in 1920 three brothers survived him. He had no sisters. His immediate brother (B2) was considered unsuitable for the headmanship and it passed instead to the next surviving brother Mpumbe III (B4). When he died in 1943 the only survivor in the matrilineage was Mpumbe IV (B2), and although he was by this time a very old man and had been previously considered unsuitable, he was selected as the next headman. In 1947, when I first visited the area he was blind, almost permanently bemused with beer and quite decrepit. At the same time Ntuweni (C7), the son of Mpumbe II by a slave wife, was about 50 years old and was the virtual village headman. All disputes were brought to him and he settled most of them. He also represented the village to the District Commissioner and at Kawinga's court house when the presence of the headman was required. Wadi, Mpumbe I's fifth wife's daughter's daughter's son, assisted him. The only thing that Ntuweni could not do was to make the sacrifices for the girls' initiation ceremony, but he took the old man to the shrine-tree and held his unsteady hand while the latter poured the flour on the ground and called on the ancestors. When Mpumbe IV died in 1948, the succession passed to a distant sister's son whom they found in Ngongondo's village in Liwonde's area. Ntuweni, who might have succeeded to the name, and for all intents and purposes was a village headman before the headman's death, was accused of killing the old man by sorcery so that he could press his claim to the succession. He consequently moved out with his sisters and founded a village of his own about 15 miles away.

622 613 When there are no heirs available one of two courses is open. The first is that a patrilaterally-linked relative may succeed to the name. I have heard, for example, of a chief's son who succeeded as Matola in the Makanjila dynasty. The son, of course, had the same clan-name as the chief.[1] In the Makanjila case there is some evidence that there were other heirs available and that this succession was the result of a clever piece of lobbying by the slaves with the Administration. I have on record a few villages where this has taken place, and where the name has kept to the slave lineage.

A more likely reaction to this situation is probably what would have happened in Mpumbe's village if no matrilineal relative could be found. Ntuweni would probably have taken the

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[1] Slave-children took the clan-names of their captors. See p. 72.

village but called it Mtuweni and not Mpumbe village. The 622
positions of the lineages in the village would have become 613
inverted, and the patrilaterally-linked lineage become the dominant lineage. In this way villages may change their name or they may acquire two names, as happened to Mlungu village in Nyambi's area. Here a man called Masalu took over the control of the village. He was the son of the previous Mlungu and the village is known to-day by either of these names. The interesting point is what will happen when he dies, because there are now sisters' sons in a distant lineage old enough to take charge of the village. The rule is, as we have seen, that the matrilineal relatives always have the first claim.

PATERNITY AND SEGMENTATION

It is interesting to note that the paternity of brothers or sisters 593
is not a differentiating feature in these social relationships. In 611
the discussions which have hinged upon the care of sorority-groups I have never heard the paternity of brothers and sisters brought up as a reason why they should hold more or less closely together. The father is important in social life as I point out later, but while groups may be linked through paternity, it does not lead to a second principle of segmentation within the lineage.[1] This is manifestly the result of the fundamental difference in a system of matrilineal descent, where paternity is of less consequence than maternity is in a patrilineal structure. Among
the Yao, unlike the patrilineal peoples of Southern and Northern [583
Africa, no marriage payments are made; divorce is easy and 586]
frequent, and there are no disputes about the custody of children, who always belong to their mother's group whether they are illegitimate or not.[2] This is consistent with the view of the husband as a mere begetter of children. Among the Yao, the

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[1] This aspect of segmentation in patrilineal peoples, with different wives of men as points of fission, is brought out particularly in Evans-Pritchard, E. E., *The Nuer*, Oxford University Press (London, 1940), and *Marriage and the Family among the Nuer*, R.-L.I. Paper, No. 11 (1944); Fortes, M., *The Dynamics of Clanship*, and *The Web of Kinship*; Kuper, H., *A Black Aristocracy*, Oxford University Press (London, 1947).

[2] This has been worked out in Gluckman, M., 'Kinship and Marriage among the Lozi of Northern Rhodesia and the Zulu of Natal', in Radcliffe-Brown, A. R., and Forde, C. D. (eds.), *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, Oxford University Press for the International African Institute (London, 1950).

613 621 622

The father and headman is almost forgotten in those villages which, though founded by him, do not contain any of his matrilineage. Sometimes men who have a number of adult children move away and found small villages of their own. I have struck a few villages of this type on the outskirts of White settlement areas at Namwera and near Zomba. The man has been a servant of the Whites as, say, an estate labourer. After ten or fifteen years on the estates he decides to stop working. Local men have probably married his daughters and he has made acquaintances with local people, while his attachment to his home village has become attenuated. Consequently, with his daughters he sets up his own homestead somewhere near the estate. He is probably both senior and junior marriage surety for his daughters' marriages, and also responsible for the welfare of his children and grandchildren. He reports serious illnesses and deaths to his wife's brother or her male uterine kinsmen, but otherwise he runs the internal affairs of his village as if he were the senior matrilineal kinsman. But as his sons grow up the sorority-group organization exerts itself, and soon his adult sons begin to take over the more arduous duties concerning the affairs of their sisters. They now walk to a sister's husband's home to tell of the husband's illnesses, or trudge for miles to find a diviner when one of the babies is ill. Their father still retains control over the village land and other important affairs concerning the village as a whole. At this stage in its history the hamlet will be known by his name. When he dies the control of the hamlet passes to his eldest son, and now it assumes once again the pattern of the ordinary Yao village. For a while it may retain the name of the father, but in due course it begins to be known by the name of the son. Gradually the father fades into the background and the son comes to the fore. Eventually, when the son dies, his sister's son assumes control over the village and inherits the name. Now there are probably some of the original headman's sons' children living in the village and forming the nucleus of a linked matrilineage. In spite of the foundation of the village as an extended family, the lineage principle soon begins to mould the village into the typical Yao pattern. It is clear from many of my genealogies in Malemia area that when villages first moved in they were made up of a man and wife and children. Now after, say, twenty years the 'extended family' pattern has com-

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pletely disappeared and we have in its place a straightforward 621
localized matrilineage as in Ali Kasunka village. 622

THE HEADMAN AS THE LINK BETWEEN THE DOMINANT LINEAGE AND THE PATRILATERALLY-LINKED GROUPS

A headman's position when his own children or the children 578
of his predecessor have started to operate as a corporate group 613
in the village is clearly difficult. To the dominant matrilineage
they are outsiders, and they are a source of tension in the more 622
complex villages. This, in essence, is the situation about which the officiating headmen have almost certainly warned him at the installation ceremony, when they told him to beware of his wife's chatter, because it may bring about a split of the village. The headman occupies a position of jural authority *over* his matrilineal relatives. He has succeeded to the name of his mother's brother and is structurally the most senior matrilineal kinsman in the village. He is directly responsible in court and outside it for the behaviour and welfare of the matrilineage members. At the same time he is personally attached to his children by ties of intimacy and sentiment. Where there is a conflict between his own children and the matrilineage members he is placed in an invidious position. By legal right he should support his lineage members, by moral right he cannot spurn his children. What he tries to do as a rule is to browbeat his matrilineal relatives into submission to maintain the peace within the village. He runs the risk, however, of alienating the support of his sisters who may turn to his younger brothers and leave the village. This is what happened in Mponda's village, as I have outlined earlier.[1] Here, it will be recalled, a quarrel started between two young girls over a pounding mortar. It spread to the mothers of the girls, who were the headman's wife and his sister. The headman tried to browbeat his sister into submission, but she immediately turned to her younger brother. The result was that the headman lost his sisters to his younger brother.

The way in which the two opposed groups in the village crystallize out into opposed factions cannot be more clearly shown than in the sequence of events in Mpakata village, in January 1947.

Mpakata was the headman of the village, and he had three younger brothers, Walusa, Merison and Nancaluya. Ali Cibwana, Mpakata's

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[1] See Chap. VI, p. 153.

578 613 622 adult son, went to Walusa one day and borrowed a chicken. Some days afterwards Walusa asked for payment for the chicken. Ali Cibwana took offence at the way in which Walusa asked for payment and told him so. Walusa remarked that Ali Cibwana was insolent and insisted on the payment for the chicken. Ali Cibwana now said that if his father's brother insisted on asking in this rude way he would not be paid back at all. The tempers of the two men became more and more frayed until at last Walusa threw Ali Cibwana to the ground. When Sanudia, Ali Cibwana's younger brother, saw this he grabbed up a stick and came up to Walusa and asked him why he had thrown his elder brother down. Walusa had hardly time to answer before Sanudia had struck him. At this Walusa's younger brothers joined in the fight. Mpakata now rushed up and started to support his sons against his younger brothers. When Mpakata's sisters and sisters' daughters, who were pounding, heard this, they took up their pounding pestles (poles about five feet long and three inches in diameter) and came running to Mpakata's younger brothers' assistance. When Mpakata saw these women coming with their poles he dashed into his house and emerged with a stick with which he defended himself. The noise and clamour had by this time attracted a number of strangers from a nearby village and they were able to pacify Mpakata's villagers. The matrilineal relatives of Mpakata gathered in one part of the village and Walusa told them they ought to leave. They decided, nevertheless, 'to say goodbye'[1] to Kaumbwe, who was a perpetual elder brother of Mpakata. Kaumbwe called in an unrelated village headman named Idi, and they held a meeting in the village the next day.

The dispute was discussed in the presence of the arbitrator. Walusa said he wished to leave the village with his sisters. Idi, however, told him that he should not do this but that they should take the matter up to Chiwalo's court. On an agreed day Mpakata and his children and matrilineal relatives went to Chiwalo's court where the case was arbitrated on by Capola who lived near to Mpakata. He found Mpakata guilty and ordered him to pay 10s. to Walusa. At the same time he told Walusa that he was not to take the female members of the matrilineage away from the village. And there the matter rested.

A village headman in Yao 'binds the village',[2] and when the village is made up of linked groups as well as his matrilineal kin,

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[1] Ostensibly to say goodbye but in fact to air their grievances.

[2] *Akutawa musi.* The word *kutawa* may also mean to build. Yao houses are built by binding poles together with ropes and then filling the gaps with mud.

[342]

the significance of this formulation of his position is clear. It 578
is when he shows partiality that the village under him is likely 613
to break up. If he sides with his children his matrilineal kin 622
are almost sure to move out; if he sides with his matrilineal kin,
his children are likely either to return to their matrilineal village
or, if they are adult, split off to set up a village of their own.
The situation is precarious for the headman and it is very difficult
for him to avoid a split in the village if he cannot keep the two
opposed groups at peace.

My investigations show that few villages have contained 605
patrilaterally-linked groups through the lives of two village headmen, 621
unless these groups were descended from slaves. When
the headman dies his successor assumes his name and social rôle. 622
He also assumes the position of father towards the remaining
children, who are in fact his cross-cousins. But his relationship
towards them is not the same as that of father to children. The
intimate link of the blood tie has been lost and the relationship
becomes formalized. As more and more headmen succeed the
genealogical link between the patrilaterally-linked groups and
the dominant matrilineage becomes more and more remote, and
the relationship becomes more and more casual. What usually 621
happens is that shortly after the death of the headman and father, 622
the patrilaterally-linked group takes exception to what the new 837
headman does or says and moves off to found a village of its
own. The case history I quoted earlier [1] brought this out clearly.
The new headman had had intercourse with the wives of his
'son'. The son complained to the arbitrators in the dispute that
'he should have been as a father to me, and he is not'. The
result was that the son refused compensation, and moved out of
the village with his sisters to build on his own. When this happens
the father-son relationship between the two villages is preserved
and perpetuated, but the link is entirely formal and co-operation
between them is limited to mutual attendance at funerals.

PATRILATERALLY-LINKED GROUPS AS THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY 567

Slave-groups in a village are usually linked patrilaterally to the 608
dominant lineage. This is because the headman who was usually 613
the captor of the slaves kept the women as concubines. They 621
were given quasi-child status in the village, so that their children

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[1] 'The Split of Cikumba Village', see Chap. V, p. 127.

621 this happens the husbands take their wives to their several villages with them.

Throughout this general process the links between groups of any particular area are constantly changing but the general pattern remains constant. A village expands outwards, and the various patrilaterally-linked groups, and often some of the segments of the dominant lineage, form hamlets separate from each other. The dominance of one of the local headmen over the others is still recognized and the general pattern of primacy is maintained. Some of the earliest villages in the area remain intact through many years. Villages which were small hamlets twenty or thirty years ago, when they had just moved into the area, have become relatively senior. Many headmen who were senior then have moved, or their villages have disintegrated, or ceased to exist. Other villages have moved in and are ranked lower. Thus through time the rank of any one headman may have changed, but the ranking system and the relationships of senior to junior headmen remain unaltered.

621 The general process is the same for the whole chiefdom,
622 though there is less overall structural change than in smaller
631 areas. The more important a village headman, the less likely is his village to disappear entirely. The most important village headmen, therefore, have long histories of association with the chief. Thus while there is considerable change going on at the lowest levels of the social system, the social structure of the whole chiefdom is remarkably stable. In other words, the rate of change taking place within the structure varies directly with the level of organization within that structure. The names of the *nduna* of Kawinga, Liwonde and Malemia are the same as those of the *nduna* who accompanied these chiefs into Nyasaland in the middle of the nineteenth century. Relatively few of them have disappeared. And so it is with important village headmen. The links between them, fixed by their rank and status relative to each other in perpetual kinship and other ties, form the political structure of the chiefdoms. From chiefdom to chiefdom the same pattern of organization is concealed behind an apparent diversity of actual links.

178 But, as a result of their contact with other peoples and their
622 absorption into the economic and administrative framework of
643 the British Empire, new social relationships are developing

amongst the Yao. The religious sanctions behind tribal initia- 178
tion ceremonies were weakened when many of the village head- 622
men adopted Islam, and the rights of holding the Islamic 643
equivalents fell to commoners who were leading Moslems.
Thus for many village headmen the significance of the holding
of initiation rights fell away. The White Administration has
introduced new political personalities into the field, such as the
court clerk, the court sergeant and other members of the chief's
bureaucracy. These persons have been able to acquire peculiar
positions of power in competition with the chief's traditional
advisers.[1] Some wealthy individuals are able to wear better
clothes, build better houses, and have more personal attendants,
than the chiefs. For example, there is a carpenter in Kawinga's [556]
area living near an Indian store,[2] who is wheeled about in a
garetta (ricksha) as the chiefs are, and who dresses far better
than any of the chiefs.

But these changes have not yet affected the pattern of social relationships appreciably. Up to the present as new elements were introduced into Yao social structure they have been absorbed in terms of the traditional structure. The traditional chiefs, therefore, became the Principal Headmen when White Administration was imposed on them. Village headmen, no longer able to compete with each other in terms of followers and slaves, now began to vie with each other for 'books'. Important village headmen became the Moslem leaders, and the larger mosques were built at their villages. The chiefs, by virtue of their annuity from the Government, are able to maintain a higher standard of living than most of their subjects: they build burnt-brick houses, they wear finer clothes, they are wheeled about in garettas or, latterly, are pillion passengers on bicycles pedalled by retainers. By using their annuities as capital, they have been able to grow more tobacco than most of their subjects and so still maintain economic ascendancy over them.

So that until 1949, at least, in spite of the introduction of

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[1] cf. my 'The Political Organization of the Yao of Southern Nyasaland'.

[2] He does not live in a village as most people do; he is an Nguru, and has none of his relatives near him, which is significant. His relationships with his clients are formal and transitory and he is not bound by traditional kinship ties. He therefore attempts to achieve prestige through conspicuous expenditure.

178 new personalities into Yao society, the social structure remained little altered. There were not enough Government officials, or
622 officials in the chief's bureaucracy, or rich individuals in Yao-
643 land to be able to represent significant elements in the social structure. In the years 1946–49 Yao social structure was still organized in terms of ranked lineage segments at one level, ranked matrilineal groups at a second, and ranked villages at a third.

765 might not break up for a week, but the practice was often modified to some degree, people
returning to their homes during the day and coming back each night to sleep in the deceased's
village. At the present time, there is a tendency to cut the proceedings short, and
the mourners generally disperse on the second day after the funeral. This period of waiting
is usually whiled away by playing and singing *chindimba*.

On the day before the company leaves the village — now, often on the day after the
768 funeral — the ceremony of shaving the head takes place. The *awilo*, assisted in the case
765 of a large party, by those who helped at the burial, shave the heads of all the dead man's
relatives. When this is completed, they begin to tear down the deceased's house. The
grass from the roof, with the hair removed from the heads of the relatives, is carried to the
cross-roads and burned. The walls of earth are torn down and made into a heap; on the
top, a stick is raised, and at its base is placed the dead man's snuff box. Sometimes a
cactus euphorbia, *ngochi*, is planted on the mound and cassava round about. The snuff box
is kept replenished with snuff. This, with the cassava, is reserved for the *awilo*; no one
else may partake of them.

While the house is being pulled down, the chief *mbilo* ties around the neck of the widow
a single string of beads or a small piece of calico, *ng'onji*. After the house has been demolished,
the *awilo* return to their homes and on the following morning, everyone else departs.

767 The position of *mbilo* is a strange one. Every man in the course of his life probably acts
as undertaker for some friend; many have probably performed the service several times.
He receives no regular payment, but beads, and, nowadays, coins are often thrown into the
pot of water with which he wets the heads of those he shaves after the funeral, and he has
the freedom of the village in which he has so acted forever afterward, the degree of freedom
being determined by the distance which he has travelled to officiate. When Wandalama
died, a headman named Chisui from Makanjila's on Lake Nyasa, over a hundred miles
away, acted as one of the *awilo*. The occasions on which he revisited Malemya's village are
[431] well remembered, as they were marked by much frolicking and some obscenity. He was
the recipient of enormous presents of fowls, sheep, and anything else he cared to take, and
having commandeered men from the village to carry these gifts for him, he would leave,
accompanied by all the people, yelling and shouting their joy at seeing him again.

Any fowls or other provisions that friends may present to the deceased's relatives at
the time of the funeral to help defray expenses are given to the *awilo*; no one else may
eat them. Some may be kept against the next death in the family.

A few days after the funeral, recourse is had to the chief to settle whether any action
768 must be taken in regard to the cause of the death. Some near relative of the dead man will
622 be chosen for this purpose; he must not be shaved by the *awilo* at the time of the funeral.
The consultation takes place at some secluded spot outside the village. The chief always
brings some one with him to witness what is said. On arriving at the appointed place, the
chief salutes the unshaven mourner who is probably accompanied by other relatives, and

then listens to an account of the circumstances attending the illness and death. The point 768
at issue is whether there is any evidence pointing to death from unnatural causes which 622
requires consulting a diviner. The chief practically always agrees with the relatives, and it is said that he will never press them to go to the *wachisango* unnecessarily. The case may end with this conference, or here may begin the long series of events described under *usawi*.[1]

During the month subsequent to the *funeral*, certain taboos have to be observed. The 765
widow may not bathe, and with the exception of the *awilo*, all who attended must refrain 768
from sexual intercourse. At the expiration of this period, beer is brewed in the village, and all the *friends* and relatives are again summoned. This beer-drinking is called "the beer of rottenness," or "the beer of resignation." In addition to the beer, food is provided, and everyone helps himself without ceremony. *Chindimba* is sung and danced and at the present day, bands of trained dancers attend, including *ching'wenyeng' wenye*.[2] A pot of beer is sunk into the ground, marking the site of the dead man's house. The night of *matapata*[3] [833]
sees husbands and wives reunited, and the widow may go through ceremonial intercourse with a man appointed for the purpose called *litunu* or *mbilo*. Sometimes the widow *refuses litunu*, and is given medicine instead to cleanse her; her body is then no longer "hot" and likely to bring disease to those about her. A widow does not marry again for two or three 587
years. A young man who loses his wife has no longer any standing in her village after 768
matapata. He is usually given a present, with the suggestion that he go elsewhere. After the death of an infant, the mother is considered unclean. She sleeps on a mat apart from her husband till after the ceremony of shaving, and then undergoes a ceremonial coitus with her husband — in which case he is called *litunu* — after which, ordinary cohabitation is resumed. If she has been a widow, or if the child was born "with disease,"[4] another man acts as *litunu*.

The morning following *matapata*, all the fires in the village are extinguished. A fresh 769
blaze is then kindled with the fire-drill, *lusanga*, either in the chief's house or in some spot
nearby, and from there, fire is carried to all the houses. The ashes of the old fires, the [372]
stones supporting the cooking pots, and the porridge sticks are taken to the cross-roads, and there destroyed. Everyone then shaves all his own hair, head, axillae, and pubis. [302]
The custom of the second shaving by the *awilo*, described in *Africana*,[5] is, I think, an adaptation from the Anyanja. A year later, beer is again brewed, and all the relatives summoned to the village to pa[illegible]e of it. There is dancing, but no ceremony.

The Yao bury their dead in regular graveyards in wooded country, the thicker the 764
forest the better, often two or three miles away from a group of villages. Different villages bury their dead in different parts of the burial ground; relatives are usually buried near
one another. Graves are never revisited, and no one would enter a graveyard except at the 769
time of a funeral, and then only after obtaining permission from the chief. Such spots are

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[1] Vide infra, p. [illegible].

[2] Vide infra, p. 270 and Pl. I.

[3] Beer-drinking.

[4] Vide infra, p. [illegible].

[5] Macdonald, op. cit., p. 111.

generous and popular, the donations may mount up to a useful sum. Dancing goes on late into the afternoon when all return to the village. 843

The man may not speak to his guardian again until after the birth of the child. The two women guardians, the *mkamusi* and the *nakanga*, as a rule cease sexual intercourse with their husbands during the same period or, at all events, during the last month before the birth of the child.

The child born of a woman who has not gone through *Litiwo* is buried alive. [847]

Chieftainship. The Yao when they migrated to their present country were headed by a number of their chiefs. These eventually settled in different areas adjacent to one another, each ruling over a considerable tract of country. The chief was supported by a number of headmen, each of whom looked after a village; the chiefs and headmen in turn being assisted by the village elders. 622● 643

Often among a chief's counselors one found a number of his relatives, and sons and brothers were often made headmen. A man assuming chieftainship often had to dispose of a brother of whom he was afraid. 643

Chieftainship is hereditary, the chief's name being passed on to each successor. Succession is to eldest son of the eldest sister or a son of some other sister. Failing these, it passes to a grand-nephew. If there is no acceptable adult nephew, a full brother may succeed.

Macdonald's account of the Malemya's succession[1] is, I believe, incorrect. The old Malemya (Nalutumbo) was succeeded according to custom by his nephew, Kasabola who, as Malemya, was called Ndalama. Kumtaja was not a younger brother of Nalutumbo or Kasabola, but a cousin of the latter. Ndalama was succeeded by a nephew, not the eldest but the second son of a sister, the eldest having already succeeded to the chieftainship of Kumtaja was therefore ineligible. The present Malemya will be succeeded by a grand-nephew, the son of a daughter of his eldest sister, his sister having no sons. [114]

A successor inherited all the wives and slaves of the deceased chief and all his goods and chattels, guns, ivory and gardens. Any small possessions might be divided among the deceased's children and in the case of guns, those who had always used them often laid claims not to be separated from their weapons; these claims were often allowed by the new chief. 643 428

In the same way, any ordinary man's successor is his nephew, the son of a sister, who inherits all goods and chattels and slave wives, but not free-born wives, nor gardens, which go to the free wives. Stock is generally divided among the children.

Before 1891, when a British Protectorate was formally declared over Nyasaland, each chief ruled supreme. He was consulted as to the dates for *Unyago;* he directed the harvesting, etc.; he proclaimed war and generally was paramount among his people. It will be seen, therefore, that he was a busy man, but he received no direct remuneration. His wealth consisted of slaves and ivory. Slaves he obtained in warfare and as blood money, 643 [554]

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[1] Op. cit., vol. I, p. 180.

000 authorities to-day: those of the British administration. Yet the headman is a key official, if usually unpaid, in that administration. For example, he has to report suspicious deaths and illnesses and strangers, and he has to see that his villagers keep the village clean, hoe paths, use latrines, follow agricultural and veterinary regulations, pay tax, &c. He is no more ready than they are to accept these as good, but he tries to enforce the rules for he is liable to be punished if he does not, by fining, imprisonment, and ultimately deposition. As he applies these unwelcome and unaccepted rules, his position becomes subject to still greater strains.

II. THE YAO OF SOUTHERN NYASALAND

J. C. MITCHELL

567 554 THE Yao people were notorious at the end of last century because of their reputation as slavers. Livingstone had noted their close association with the Arabs in this trade and much of the effort of the early administrators of Nyasaland was directed to suppressing the slaving activities of the Yao. While the slave trade has been fairly well studied, the associated but different phenomenon of domestic slavery has not been nearly so thoroughly investigated. It seems that domestic slavery was an important part of the Yao social structure in those days, before the coming of the white man abolished at one stroke this and many other social institutions. But, though the institution of domestic slavery ceased to exist, the system of values upon which it was built still survives and still affects the social structure of the modern Yao. We might summarize this system of values by saying that the status of a man depends on the number of people over whom he exercises certain rights and for whom, in turn, he is responsible. In the past, a man could increase his status in the community by acquiring slaves. This he did by buying them with calico obtained through the slave trade, or with ivory, beeswax, tobacco, and other natural products; by taking them in compensation for the death of a relative; or simply by kidnapping them. Slaves were often taken as spouses by the members of the group over which the man exercised his command, or by the man himself as wives, and thus the group was further enlarged by natural increase. Though these slaves and slave-children had fairly well-defined rights, they were not free to leave the command of their owner, and the group was from that point of view a stable one. The leader's command over his matrilineal and other relatives, however, was not so absolute and it is with this aspect of the social structure that I am here concerned. This system of values still persists and forms the basis for evaluating the status of men in the Yao community. ● [622] The high status of a village headman is usually expressed in such terms as: 'He is a big man—he has many people', or 'he has many huts'. The village headman himself and the men under him are motivated by the same system of values so that in any village at any time there is a balance between the desire of certain members of that village to break away and establish units with their own dependants, and the desire of the headman to retain those people under his charge.

622 554 578 The tensions that exist in this situation are well recognized by the Yao and they always express them explicitly during the ceremonial succession to village headman-

ship. The difficulties of his position are brought home to the neophyte village headman 622
in speeches made by old and experienced men. On one such occasion I heard a 554
man say, 'Some men who marry into a village are bad and can split a village like this 578
one by telling lies to the headman, saying that his sisters are talking behind his back and are insulting him. When a headman hears all this he might break his village by ill-treating his relatives, thus causing himself to be left all alone.' In this way the headman's responsibility for maintaining harmonious relations between the members of the village and himself is emphasized. His failure to do so results in what they call a break in the village—the departure of some of the members to live elsewhere—which is a severe blow to the status of the headman. In fact, he is dependent on his dependants for status, and the Yao are quick to point this out to neophyte headmen, saying, 'A tree cannot grow without branches.'

We can better understand the situation if we consider the social structure of the 361
Yao village a little more closely. The Yao are a matrilineal people and are dominantly
matrilocal. They live in small groups of huts scattered fairly evenly over the country 621
and from a few hundred yards to possibly a mile or so apart. Such clusters may contain as few as five or as many as sixty or more huts, occupied by between 20 and 200 people.

These people are almost always kinsfolk, and in the smaller villages they are
usually all either matrilineal descendants of a common ancestress or their spouses. 621
In the larger groups there is a more complex situation which I shall analyse below. 612
In the simpler groups there may be no male matrilineal descendant in the village and the leadership of the group is taken over by a senior female descendant of the founder of the village. Usually, however, if the group is large, one of the male matrilineal descendants lives patrilocally in the village and assumes leadership.

The relationship between a male matrilineal descendant and the female matrilineal 612
descendants who are in his charge is signified by the word '*mbumba*'. The word
particularly refers to the relationship between a man and his sisters and I have therefore 592
translated it as 'sorority-group'. It includes a man's full sisters, matrilineal
female collaterals (whom he calls sisters), their female children, and the female children 601
of those female children, and so on. It is usually used in the sense of 'somebody's sorority-group'. A man belonging to the descent-group of the sorority-group may refer to these women as 'our sorority-group'. The man who is in charge of the sorority-group is referred to as the *asyene mbumba*. This could be translated as 'owner of the sorority-group' but because of the property associations with the word 'owner' in our language, I have instead translated this as 'warden of the sorority-group' which expresses more accurately the relationship between a man and his
female relatives. Even in those groups where there is a female in charge of the 612
village and no male matrilineal descendant is resident in the group, there is usually
some one man, possibly married in some other village, who is warden of the sorority-group. 592
The warden of a sorority-group has certain precise duties to perform on 582
behalf of his charges. First, he is concerned with the good relations between members
of the sorority-group and with other such groups. He has to settle most of the 622
domestic quarrels that take place between members of the sorority-groups. Second, and this is considered to be a most important function, he is the person who is the

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612 marriage-surety for the marriages of the members of the group. Briefly this means
that he must be approached before a marriage can be legally contracted by any
592 member of his charge, he or his representative is present at the ceremony which
[583 formally announces the marriage, and he is responsible for the behaviour of his
female relative in that marriage. Third, he is immediately concerned with the
physical welfare and health of his sorority-group. He must track down the sorcerers causing their illnesses and supply the medicine to heal them. He has to arrange for the ritual purification of mourners after the death of one of the sorority-group's members. Fourth, he must be present in the court-house if one of his charges is involved in a case and he is usually looked to for the money for the fine. I have known a case not to begin because the warden of the sorority-group was not present. Frequently if the husbands of the female members of his charge default, he has to provide the hut-tax money.

Usually the warden of the sorority-group is the eldest brother of a group of adult
612 full sisters. The younger brothers of the group of sisters, while concerned with their
592 welfare, do not stand in this particular responsible position. They refer to the
sorority-group as ' our sorority-group '. The elder brother refers to the sorority-
593 group, be it noted, as ' my sorority-group ', and this sets him over and against his
younger brothers. The position that the warden holds, however, is not rigidly fixed,
622 for a younger brother may assume control of the sorority-group if for some reason
he is dissatisfied with the way in which affairs are being conducted, and is able so to
assert himself.

If we recall that the status of a man in a Yao community is determined by the
593 number of dependants that he can command, it is easy to see that relationships between
554 an elder brother and his younger brother are distinctive. The elder brother is respon-
sible for the actions of his younger brother in much the same way as he is for one of
578 his sorority-group, and the younger brothers have a great emotional attachment to
their older brothers. Yet at the same time the elder brother stands in the way of the
612 younger brother in his striving for status, in that while the elder brother is warden
of the sorority-group the younger brother cannot be, and therefore cannot have
622 dependants and status. It is not surprising to find that accusations of sorcery are
frequently made between brothers and the result often is that the younger brother
takes the sorority-group away from his sorcerer brother to some other place and sets
up a new village with it. Therefore, one possible source of instability in a Yao
village lies in the operation of the kinship system in a system of values which reckons
status by adherents.

622 I have thus far been describing the simpler types of village. In the larger groups it
is common for the warden of the sorority-group to live in the village where his
591 sorority-group is. Then he usually brings one (or sometimes more) of his wives to
the village, where she lives patrilocally. The daughters that are born to her do not
612 return to the sorority-group from which the headman's wife came but marry and set
613 up households near their mother in the village of their father. Thus there develops
in time a second sorority-group in the village, alongside the first sorority-group, and
621 related to it through the headman. At this point we may say that the man's position
has changed from that of headman of a village containing a single sorority-group, to
the more complicated and less secure one of village headman over a more hetero-

genous group, in which his jurisdiction over one part of the village arises from his 622
position as the warden of a sorority-group, and that which he exercises over the other
sorority-group derives partly from his position as a non-matrilineal relative and 591
partly from his own personal qualities. The warden of the second sorority-group is
the headman's own son and it is he who takes over all the functions proper to that 612
position, but the successor to the headmanship is a man's sister's son, usually, though 613
not invariably, the first-born son of the eldest sister. Each village headman in turn
brings his wife to live in his village and each headman's wife in turn tends to set up a 621
fresh group which is of a different lineage affiliation from that of the headman. In addition to this the warden of the sorority-group formed from the first headman's children tends in due course to live patrilocally and the children of his wife set up yet another foreign group in the village. Hence, theoretically, with each generation the number of opposed groups in a village doubles itself, and in a few generations, were this to continue, the position would become extremely complex. In fact a village of long standing is seen to be composed of a central lineage group to which the headman belongs, and a series of other lineage groups related to the headman's lineage group through one or other of the past and present headmen of that village. Such groups of different lineage make-up are usually mutually opposed and are held together only by the combined influences of a weak patrilineal connexion with the headman's lineage and the personality of the present headman.

This situation is clearly an uneasy one for the headman. His wife is looked upon as 621
a stranger and is often made to feel it. The headman's sorority-group often expresses
its hostility and jealousy towards her. The children of the two groups are on no 622
easier terms. They call each other 'cross-cousin' (*asiwani*) and are expected to marry
one another. At the same time the hostility between them is formulated in joking 578
relationships. This critical situation of the headman is made clear to him on the day 612
of his succession. One headman was told: 'As you have got wives, do not listen to
what they say. They may be lying. Sometimes they will quarrel with your sisters and 605
say that your sisters have been insulting you. This is false. When you hear these reports you may be unfair to your sisters and the people will say that you have broken your village through listening to nonsense.' Thus when conflicts arise between members of a village the headman is in a peculiar position and it is difficult for him to remain impartial. In such a situation the tendency is to call in an outsider to try to settle the differences. Sometimes these differences are patched up and the village continues as a unit. But, particularly after the death of the first village headman, the tendency is for one of the groups to move away to a completely new area, there to set up a unit of its own.

I quote an actual case to illustrate this procedure:

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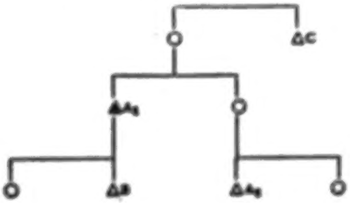

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'In 1946 village A had about 30 huts in it. A certain man B was the son of the previous headman called A_1 and hence mother's brother's son or cross-cousin of the present headman called A_2. B had two wives living patrilocally and while B was serving in the Army he had a letter from one of his sisters (i.e. his mother's brother's daughter or cross-cousin to the headman) to say that A_2 was sleeping with B's wives. When B returned he started making inquiries from his wives and he eventually secured a confession from them. B then went to a man called C, who stood in the relationship of mother's brother to the original A_1 and complained about the behaviour of the village headman. C also instituted inquiries and ascertained that it was true. C then approached a local headman of some standing (whom I shall call D) and asked him to arbitrate in the case. D pronounced A_2 guilty and awarded compensation of £6. 10*s.* to B. B, however, refused to take the money, and said that he wished to leave the village. D observed that he had every right to do this and that A_2 had no right to complain 'since he had broken the village himself'. B took his sorority-group, who occupied about twenty of the thirty huts, to a place about thirty miles away and set up a village of his own. The sorority-group of the village headman A_2 remained behind in the old village.'

This case illustrates the points that I have made. It shows how the two groups in this village stand opposed to each other in that B's sister wrote to tell him of A_2's conduct. Also when the village did break up it did so along certain very clear lines of genealogical relationship. Second, it illustrates the operation of the desire for dependants in that B refused what by Yao standards is a very large sum of money for compensation and preferred to move off and establish a village of his own. This attitude is also shown by the arbitrator who takes the point of view that regrettable as it is, the village must in the circumstances split, and while he appreciates the headman's feelings he makes it clear that the headman has no one to blame but himself. Third, it is interesting to note that this split took place after the death of the old village headman when the personal ties with both opposed groups were severed. Though the new village headman A_2 assumes the kinship terms of his predecessor and also calls the children of A_1 'children' yet in fact he is their cross-cousin while the old village headman was their father.

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The position of the village headman in Yao social structure may be summarized thus: the village headman is the leader of a group which may be a simple kin-group or a composite group of two or more opposed matrilineages linked to each other through himself or one of his predecessors whom he represents to them. The numerical size of the village determines the status of the headman, but the size that it can reach is limited by an immanent instability in the kinship structure which is expressed, in terms of their status system, first, in the competition of brothers for the wardenship of the sorority-group, and second, in the competition between the headman and the wardens of the patrilineally linked sorority-groups, who wish to set up villages of their own.

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The Yao see villages as units and this is clearly shown at the initiation ceremonies of boys, when the initiates are kept in grass-sheds, each partition of which refers to a particular village. In the same way a person is identified as belonging to a particular village known by the name of the village headman. Thus a man might say: 'I come from Kumpumbe's village.'

Village headmen themselves are graded in importance and there are certain marks of rank which distinguish the more important headmen. We have already examined one of the most obvious ways in which the village headman's importance is judged, that is, by the number of people in his village. In addition there are other ways in which village headmen may be distinguished both from the common people and from less important headmen. Thus, for example, some of the more important village headmen have the right to conduct initiation ceremonies, this right being granted to them by the man who is in a way the most important village headman of all—the Chief. The right to hold a boys' initiation ceremony (*lupanda*) is of more importance than the right to hold a girls' initiation ceremony (*ciputu*). Yet another mark of rank is the right to wear a plain crimson band around the forehead (*mlangali*), this right also being granted by the Chief. 622 554 881

The Administration has recognized the more important village headmen and has entrusted to them certain duties. By no means all the people called 'village headmen' in this paper are recognized as such by the Administration, but I do not know of any person who has the right to wear a red band and is not also an Administrative village headman. 622 554

The status system has apparently been taken over from pre-European days, but it is uncertain to what extent these important village headmen had powers. Some to-day have all the marks of rank that the Chief has, i.e., they hold both boys' and girls' initiation ceremonies, are entitled to the special greeting accorded to important village headmen (*subake*), wear a red band, have the right to be buried in the village and not in the common cemeteries, and to have their bodies prepared for interment by people of similar rank. It appears that such people exercised a certain amount of power, by reason of their personal qualities, over less powerful neighbours, and some were able in the past to demonstrate their autonomy by moving off to establish petty chiefdoms of their own.

Nowadays the Administrative village headmen have certain statutory duties to perform towards other minor groups actually independent but considered, for the purposes of the Administration, to belong to the village. The relative importance of the headman is still the deciding factor in such questions as determining who is to be called in to arbitrate in a case. Thus, though for Administrative purposes a small village may be considered to be a part of a larger Administrative village under an Administrative village headman, yet when a case for arbitration occurs within that smaller village, some other person than the Administrative village headman may be called in as arbitrator. 622 554 631 692

Laws promulgated by the Administration are conveyed through the Chief to the Administrative village headman and in this way a hierarchy of power is being introduced. The small village headman now sees the Administrative village headman as a representative of the Chief and the Administration. The Administrative village headman in turn sees the Chief in this light. But in matters directly affecting the Administration, the small village headman also sees the Administrative village headman as his own representative *vis-à-vis* the Chief and the Administration. 622 631

In general the village is by far the most important corporate body in the social organization of the Yao, not only as a significant primary group but also as an element 621 622

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in the political sphere. The position of the village headman therefore is of cardinal importance and merits further study.

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III. THE FORT JAMESON NGONI

775 present fortunes. But it is to the human soul after death, when it is considered as having an influence on the lives and fortunes of those it has left behind in the world and consequently as a power to be propitiated and honoured, that the term *mulungu* is more strictly applied. Freed from the body it passes to *mulungu*, and there is regarded as endowed with powers which it never possessed when alive on 769 earth. To pray to such a spirit is described as *kulomba mulungu*, to worship *mulungu*, never *lisoka* in this case. Such *mulungu* worship enters largely into Yao religious or social life. In almost every Yao village there will be found a shrine which is the centre of the worship of the inhabitants. It consists of a carefully 346 built hut enclosed within a strong grass fence or hedge of a species of cactus plant. 769 The hut itself is built of the usual native materials—the walls of wooden posts, 778 bamboos, and strong-reed grass bound together with bark-rope and plastered over with clay or stiff mud. The roof is of grass laid on a framework of bamboos, and is generally covered with long strips of white or coloured calico. On the ridge or apex of the roof are fixed a couple of flags or an umbrella or two. One wall is usually left open so that the interior is easily seen. Within, from the bamboo rafters are suspended handkerchiefs, cloths, bunches of beads, etc., all offerings to the *mulungu* of the dead headman or chief from his friends and relatives. The floor is of clay carefully smeared with sand in native fashion. A raised platform or mound of earth in the centre marks the spot where the grave was made. The 764 *asilo* or officials who preside at the funeral obsequies, first dug for about 8 or 10 feet down in a perpendicular direction, and then on the western side of this well they hollowed out a shallow cave in the earth. In this the body was placed, laid on its side with the knees bent up under the chin, and the face turned towards the east. Various articles of personal property were next placed beside the corpse, clothes, ivory, guns, axes, hoes, etc., and the mouth of the cave closed up with wooden posts and a strong reed mat. The grave was then filled in and the surface [769] carefully finished as we have seen. At the head of the mound a native pot was fixed in the ground for the reception of the offering of beer which is an almost invariable accompaniment of any act of worship paid to the *mulungu* of the dead.

769 Such a shrine marks the grave of almost every Yao chief or headman, and is [775 regarded as the abode of his soul or the spot where his *mulungu* is most accessible. If his successor is about to undertake a long journey or enter on any warlike 622] expedition against an enemy or neighbour, he must first *kutaga mbepesi*, place an offering here to secure the favour and assistance of the *mulungu* of the dead. Should a long-continued drought endanger the prospects of the grain crop, the departed chief must be solicited to send the lacking rain. A feast is first prepared, almost always of beer, sometimes with the addition of native porridge, fowl, or game. The worshippers gather round the shrine bringing part of the food which they have prepared. Their priest for the occasion is the successor of the dead chief, sometimes one or other of the *asilo* who placed the body in the grave, or it may be that any other near relation of the dead man is chosen to represent the people and act [602] as their spokesman. The nearer the relationship the more influence will he have
with the dead.

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18 The people with whom this paper is concerned[1]
occupy that part of Nyasaland between the Chikala
Range in the South; Mount Mangoche in the
North; the Shire River to the West; and the
Portuguese East African border to the East.
This area is represented on the accompanying
diagrammatic map. A more detailed description
of the general social organization of the Yao in
this area, and of their history and general cultural
background is to be published shortly.[2] At
36 this point it is sufficient to say that the Yao
are semi-subsistence cultivators living in village
settlements ranging from a few huts to sixty
or more, with an average of about twelve. This
represents say a population average of about
60 per village but ranging from 15 to over 200.
62 These village settlements are inhabited by groups
61 of kinsmen. In general there is a matrilineal core
of kinsmen of whom the village headman, who
622 has the same name as the village, is one. In some
more complex villages there are subsidiary matri-
lineages related to the matrilineal core agnatically

[P.141C]

62| through one or other incumbent of the position
of village headman.[9] Succession to posts of autho-
61| rity, including that of the chief, is matrilineal.
622 Ideally the succession should pass to the first-
born son of a man's eldest sister, but this is not
always followed, for the personal qualities of the
successor are most important.

16| The total African population of the area studied
is 61,000. There are one or two Indian traders
and two Europeans permanently resident in
the area. One European is a missionary in the
north-east corner and the other an Agricultural
officer in the north centre of the area. Part of
63| the area is administered by the District Commis-
sioner, Zomba, and part by District Commis-
sioner, Fort Johnston, and these officers tour
the districts under their jurisdiction. Occasionally
other White officials and labour recruiters appear,
but in the main, Whites are not often seen in this
491 area. The one road traversing it is usually impass-
able for a part of the rainy season.

[P 143A]

643 782 fice to the ancestors. The other public occasion was at initiation ceremonies. A successful initiation, i.e. one in which the initiates were not beset by misfortune, depended upon the goodwill of the ancestors of the chief. Initiates therefore gathered at the chief's court-village before the initiation, when the sanction of the spirits was asked and the initiates severally blessed. After this they scattered to the bush-schools near their villages only to return when initiation was completed and the chief received them into tribal society.

643 769 The people who had submitted themselves, willingly or unwillingly, to the rule of a chief, in turn expected certain services from him. He provided them, as we saw, with mystical protection through his ancestors. On a more pragmatic plane he was able to arm and co-ordinate military forces thereby giving his people protection from attack. Within his area of rule he was a common person of final appeal in the regulation of relationships of his subjects.

In these various ways, by propitiating his ancestor's spirits on behalf of his subjects, by settling differences between subjects, by co-ordinating defence and in fact by being a unique personality in the area, the chief became the symbol of unity of his tribal group. The symbolism was clearly noticeable on the death of a chief when a short period of social disorganization called *cipinimbe* followed. The members of the chief's village were allowed to pillage and to commit rape and other criminal acts without suffering legal action. The demise of the symbol of unity was followed by a period of disunity before the appointment of a successor restored the *status quo*.

622 [769] At the same time much of what has been said about the chief was true also of important village headmen. Village headmen also made sacrifices to their ancestors but only in domestic or village affairs. They too built up their prestige by slaving. Many villages in Southern Nyasaland to-day

● 622 are composed of the descendants of slave-wives of village headmen in days past. Like the village
643 headmen the chief was considered to be in danger from contact with death. He would not attend
622 the funeral of commoners, he would not eat the
761 chicken which was brought to him at the announcement of the death of a commoner (for a village
[753] headman) or subject (of a chief). Should he do so he would suffer from a disease called ndaka. Also village headmen, like the chief were supposed to be well versed in medicine and were regarded with some awe on this account. The chief and the village headmen were distinguished from the commoners in these ways.

643 But, the chief himself was a village headman.
622 He had to administer the affairs of his family group and slaves as had other village headmen.
692 He was involved in the struggle for power going on around him because he was not lifted above these secular struggles as was, for example, the Zulu King.[3] Duff MacDonald records for example: "In a dispute between the inhabitants of different villages, the respective headmen represent their own subjects, and the chief is appealed to. All his decisions are final. Still the chief may otherwise have less influence than a powerful headman, and we have known cases where he simply contented himself with grumbling when his headman acted contrary to his desire; and in many criminal trials he is eclipsed by the sorcerers and pounders of poison."[4]
643 Again, MacDonald records how the chief tried
622 to entice subjects away from a village headman at a trial by pointing out that the village headman had a poor character and was unsuitable to look after people.[5] While there seems to have been some evidence that a number of village headmen under a chief acted jointly in the face of a common danger, but apparently with no powerful military organisation. Village headmen seem to have been almost entirely autonomous in their actions, slave-raiding on their own, even raiding villages who paid tribute to the same chief as they did.

[P.143C]

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[1] See Max Gluckman, "The Kingdom of the Zulu of South Africa" in M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard ed., *African Political Systems*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 25 et seq. The Zulu king had no [illegible] [illegible] but [illegible] the military regiments about him so that he could use them to destroy his rivals.

[2] Dow MacDonnell (1882), Vol. I, p. 110.

8 Mitchell E-5 (1946-1947) 1949

[P 144 A]

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643 622 578 There is little doubt that village headmen did wax in power and finally break away to form the nucleus of a chiefdom of their own. The chief that a headman had left could do little to regain his lost subject and he had to rule not by tyranny but by tact. Duff MacDonald, for instance, records: "When a quarrel arises between the chief of the country and an important headman the latter may rebel and found a new kingdom, thus depriving the old chief perhaps of one-third of the villages in his dominion".[1] Nkanda is an example. "Nkanda of Chiradzulo was at first a headman of Kumpama's but rebelled and lives on the Southern side of that mountain an easy day's march from Blantyre."[2]

643 The leader was known, and is still known to-day, by the term *mwene cilambo*. This might be translated as "owner of the country" but the term "owner" in this context would be a mistranslation. I prefer to translate this phrase as: "The person with whom a certain area is identified".[3] Hence when a man says, as the Yao do: "I come from Kawinga's", he does not mean that the land is owned by Kawinga, but that Kawinga is the most important man in that area. 645 631 692 622 Among the village headmen in the area under a particular leader there were a number of trusted village headmen called *nduna*, which term I have translated as "councillors". These councillors had special duties to perform. They were in the nature of governors in outer areas and each had a number of other villages under his jurisdiction. By this I mean that these villages were supposed to take certain cases for trial to him and to approach the leader through him. The councillors were supposed to visit the village of the chief each morning and to report anything untoward. The councillors also had the important duty of advising the chief, particularly in connexion with raiding of neighbouring tribes. Councillors also arbitrated in the domestic affairs of the chief and in the all too frequent conflicts between the Chief, his sister's sons and his younger brothers.

[P.144C]

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643 Duff Macdonald (1882), Vol. I, p. 137. Duff Macdonald (1882), Vol. I, p. 33.

622 Cf. G. Wagner, "The Political Organization of the Bantu of Kavirondo" in M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard ed., *African Political Systems*, at p. 210: "The Logoli term omwene refers both to 'ownership' of objects and of persons. It differs, of course, from our concept of ownership in several respects. Thus the omwene (owner) of a person is the one who has not only the foremost rights over him but also the foremost obligations towards him."

643 I feel, was not due to a break-up of the chief's
power but rather to a breakdown of domestic
175 slavery and the system of sanctions that lay
648 behind it, thereby freeing slaves who started setting up their own homesteads. It illustrates that the social system was fundamentally disturbed by the changes wrought by British domination as early as 1903.

643 This process continued until the Administration
saw fit in 1912 to introduce legislation to prevent
622 further splitting up of communities and to give
175 a certain amount of power to "paid native local
authorities . . . who shall be responsible to the
648 District Residents for the good order and administration of their villages or areas."[3] Hence with the passing of the District Administration (Natives) Ordinance 1912, the Administration began to recognize the indigenous political functionaries and to absorb them into the general political machinery of the Territory. In this Ordinance, village headmen were recognized as possessing a certain amount of power over the people who lived in their villages. Amongst the village headmen one was to be recognized as a Principal Village Headman. The Ordinance made it clear that the position of the Principal Village Headman was in no way to be regarded as similar to the old tribal position of chief. Though the Ordinance further warned that persons who were formerly chiefs were not necessarily to be appointed Principal Headmen, it should be noted that many Principal Headmen were in fact such people. Thus, in 1912, the leadership position of certain headmen in the Territory, though always recognized by the Africans themselves before that date, was further officially recognized and they were given specific powers by the British. "Residents were to indicate carefully by their attitude towards, and dealings with, Principal Headmen the fact that they were officially recognized as chiefs in their respective sections and that, as such, they were entitled to the respect and obedience of their people."[4] Nevertheless it was planned to have a structure

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643 622 175 648 in which the District Commissioner would be the real authority with the Principal Headmen as his subordinates, to carry out certain well-defined duties under his instructions. The Principal Headmen were expected to assist in the concentration of the huts in accordance with the new regulations concerning village headmen and the villages they controlled. Measures for the sanitation in the villages, sweeping and cleaning of villages, the construction of refuse-pits and latrines, were included in the Ordinance and the responsibility for this devolved upon the headmen. Village headmen were also expected to report crimes, abnormal illnesses and deaths, and so on. A clause specifically stated that no power to hear

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P.149B]

IV. THE PRESENT POSITION

643 175 648 In order to illustrate the structure of the political divisions with which we are dealing, I shall outline the make-up of the three districts under the Native Authorities Kawinga, Liwonde and Nyambi (see accompanying map).

131 It will be recalled that Kawinga and Liwonde trace their descent from a single ancestress three generations back from the present Kawinga and five generations back from the present Liwonde. The groups under the leadership of these two brothers Liwonde I and Kawinga I, entered Nyasaland in the early part of the nineteenth century and after various campaigns in Mount Mangoche area migrated across the Shire River at Mvera and took up their position on Kongwe hill. Here the second Kawinga died. Shortly after this the groups were displaced by Ngoni raids and they recrossed the Shire River and moved southwards to displace another Yao chief, Malemia, from Mount Cikala (near Zomba), which stronghold Kawinga held until they were displaced by the British attacks in 1895. Liwonde at first occupied the neighbouring range Caoni but soon moved down to the Shire River. He too was displaced by British attacks and fled with Ka-

[TEXT CONTINUES MIDDLE OF P.149B]

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and determine petty native cases was conferred upon the headmen, though the District Commissioner was supposed to seek their advice when necessary.

Therefore, from the time of conquest a pattern of superordination of the Whites and subordination of the Africans was established and the indigenous political system remained largely without official recognition until the Native Authorities Ordinance was passed in 1933. The major change wrought by this Ordinance was that Native Courts were planned and instituted by the Native Courts Ordinance of the same year. At the same time a Native Treasury was founded.

IV. The Present

POSITION

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wings to Portuguese East Africa. They were allowed to return later and they took up their positions in an area roughly outlined in the early part of this paper. At the same time, owing to military action by the Portuguese a certain number of refugees were crossing the border into the Lake Ciuta area of Nyasaland.

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TABLE I

Demographic Composition of Political Areas[1]

Sub. Area	*Tot. Pop.*	*Admin. Vills.*	*Av. Pop. of Admin. Vills.*	*Tribal Composition*			
				Yao	Nguru	Nyanja	Ngoni
				%	%	%	%
N.A. Kawinga (Yao)	23,087	311	74	51	37	10	2
S.N.A. Cemba (Yao)	5,119	61	84	72	20	7	1
S.N.A. Mposa (Yao)	4,411	60	74	49	19	32	—
S.N.A. Chiwalo (Yao)	2,202	19	116	80	15	5	—
S.N.A. Ngokwe (Mpotola)	2,868	21	136	16	43	40	1
S.N.A. Chikweo (Mpotola)	7,102	49	145	28	56	16	—
N.A. Liwonde (Yao)[2]	12,716	106	120	75	20	5	—
N.A. Nyambi (Yao)[3]	7,335	63[4]	116	73	27	—	—

643 648 to bear on his sub-chiefs. For example, when one sub-chief mishandled a prisoner, the chief did not feel himself to be in a position to reprimand the sub-chief. He reported the matter to the District Commissioner. Another had expressed displeasure at the conviviality of the sub-chief with an Nguru man. He had given instructions that the one Nguru with whom the sub-chief was on intimate terms, should be beaten if found together with the sub-chief again. The sub-chief merely countermanded the ruling and nothing further was done about it. When one of the chiefs was to be given a medal by the Governor it was only with great difficulty that the sub-chiefs could be induced to attend the ceremony. One of the sub-chiefs said: "Why should my feet get sore walking to his capital? He's getting the medal, not me". The Native Authority of his own account has not sufficient authority to reprimand a S.N.A. and where this must be done he must call in the District Commissioner to do it.

4. *The Village Headmen and the Villagers*

622 A District Commissioner once referred to the village headman as "the lance-corporal of the political system—doing all the work and getting all the kicks". This description is an illuminating one. The population in the area is distributed in hamlets of mainly matrilineal kinsmen usually composed of a man and his female matrilineal relatives and spouses (see p. 142). The male leader of this group I call a village headman but this should not be confused with the social personality here called the Administrative village headman. For purposes of the Administration, villages and hamlets are grouped under officially recognized and remunerated village headmen. Administrative village headmen usually have some local standing. Some have the right to wear the red band which distinguishes rank, some have the right to conduct initiation ceremonies for both boys and girls, they are all given the greeting correct for people of some rank, they are referred to by a term which signifies both the chief and the village headman (*mwenye*).

The administrative village headman has certain duties which he must perform in respect of his

622 Administrative village. The N.A.'s bureaucracy considers him responsible for the collection of the taxes though, of course, the legal responsibility rests on the tax-payer. The village headman is generally responsible for the various regulations that the villagers must carry out. In practice the Administrative village headman may be in charge of a single kin-group and thus have a certain amount of control over the villagers because of his kinship with them. More frequently, however, the Administrative village headman is also in charge of a number of other hamlets, sometimes completely unrelated to him but who happen to have been assigned to his jurisdiction. He then delegates the responsibilities to the headmen in charge of the hamlets.

622 554 The Yao judge rank among the village headmen largely in terms of historical antecedents and by the number of dependants that a village headman has. While a certain village headman may be ranked fairly highly in the status system because his ancestors were closely associated with the ancestors of the chief, he may not now have many villagers around him. A newcomer to the area however, can only become notable by acquiring sufficient followers to make him a man of considerable power. Associated with rank are the various insignia that I have mentioned, i.e. the right to hold initiation ceremonies, the right to wear a red band round the head, etc. The competition among village headmen therefore, is phrased largely in terms of competition for these particular insignia of rank. They strive to be recognized as Administrative village headmen—"to have a book" as they say, since this at once means that they will receive a remuneration for work which they would have to do anyway, and it also means that they would be recognized as village headmen in the eyes of the White Administration. Village headmen also compete with each other to have the right to hold initiation ceremonies and use the threat to move out of the chief's area to bring pressure to bear on him to force him to grant the right.

692 While domestic quarrels are usually settled by the kin-group leaders and by the husband's and wife's parties conferring together, differences out-

692 of White values which coincide with their own.

Informants say that the position of the village
692 headman in contrast with that of the chief is
643 getting progressively weaker. They maintain
that cases once tried by the village headman are
622 now taken to the chief's court. Whether this is true or not is difficult to ascertain. The fact that there is some sanction on the guilty party to settle the compensation if he is tried in the chief's court, probably pays a part. The compensation awarded is recorded in the Court Case book and the chief is empowered to keep a man under remand until it is paid. The chief sometimes supports the village headman against recalcitrant subjects. A man once refused to pay a compensation awarded against him by a village headman. The village headman referred the case to the chief who said to the man: "As you have disobeyed the order of the village headman it means that you have insulted me, the District Commissioner and the Governor". But in general there is a tendency for the central authority to be strengthened and the chief emphasizes his relationships to the White Administration in order to consolidate his position of dominance over his headmen. At a succession ceremony of a village headman the chief who had supported an unpopular candidate said: "This man has been chosen by me and the Governor agrees with me". Clearly in this insecure situation the chief saw himself against his subjects, and as part of the White Administration. He uses his power in this political situation to establish a dominance over the headmen, that he could never have established before the White men came (see p. 144).

VI. General SUMMARY

642 depends on the field of values in which the inter-
177 action is taking place. To illustrate this with a simple example, when the court messenger exacted a levy of 1d. from each garden-owner in the area where the sacrificial cloth had been stolen from the tree-shrine, they saw in him a

796 THE WHOLE VILLAGE IS THOROUGHLY 'SPRING-CLEANED', ALL RUBBISH
[364] is swept up, the ground round the houses is hoed clean, and the interiors remudded. Ceremonial beer is brewed by the head-wife of the chief, and after this has been drunk the ashes of the fire used in the brewing are carefully collected and taken to a *malekano* ("cross-roads," or "diverging of paths") where they are deposited.
[763] The chief, as representative of his people, bathes in special medicated water, a
[524] decoction made from the bark of *ng'weaya* and *mbosa*, and the root of *mpingo*.
[622] This completes the ordinary annual ceremony, at which new fire is not made.

On certain special occasions a more elaborate ritual is carried out; such occasions are the death of a chief, a threatened epidemic of infectious disease, a murder (especially by shooting) and the frequent occurrence of quarrels in the village.

In such circumstances, in addition to the ordinary *pyajila* ceremony described above, the porridge sticks of the whole village are renewed and all fires extinguished. The discarded sticks and all ashes of the old fires are carried to the meeting of paths, where the former are stuck upright in the ground and the ashes piled together;
[372] this is done in procession, all the people taking part. On their return to the village new fire is made by friction by either the chief or his younger brother—usually the latter; fire procured in any other way would nullify the proceedings. Finally
[763] all the people bathe in the medicated water used only by the chief at the ordinary ceremony.

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776 In addition to this special form of the *pyajila* ceremony, another rite is sometimes performed after the occurrence of a murder or as prophylactic against the spread of epidemic disease. The doctor first makes a kind of trough (*lukungwa*) from the bark of *mtondowolo* or *mpapa*, and procures a *chichiliko* (or *chipengule*) basket—used as a strainer in salt-making. Having collected his medicines he proceeds to the bank of the stream near the usual bathing-place of the village and digs a shallow hole, in which he places the basket; in this he puts the leaves of a certain thorny shrub and covers the whole with the trough, which is banked up with earth so as to be perfectly firm. He then puts his "medicines" into the trough; these are, first, the head of an iron hammer and a piece of slag, both from a smelting furnace. On top of these he puts pieces of the root of a certain tree which has many and particularly sharp thorns, and bits of bark from two trees peculiar for having very straight stems. Having distributed these evenly along the floor of the trough, he fills it with water and then proceeds to construct an arch over the end of the trough farthest from the stream. Two long poles, cut from a kind of tree particularly rich in sap, are planted in the ground, one at each side of the trough and close to it; these are bent over towards each other, and fastened together by means of a strip of their own bark. A bamboo is now planted alongside each, and similarly tied to its fellow. During all these preparations and throughout the ceremony it is essential that the doctor has no knots in any part of his clothing.

The preparations are now complete, and when all the fires in the village have been extinguished the people go in procession to the spot where the doctor awaits them. All must be poorly clad and must have no metal about them.

[622] The chief opens the ceremony. He steps into the trough and taking some of the medicated water therefrom in his hands he rinses his mouth with it. He then
[769] offers a prayer to the spirits of his ancestors, first stating the emergency and detailing the measures which are to be taken to deal with it (new fires, sweeping, discard of porridge-sticks and shaving). The prayer over, he splashes the water in the trough over his body and passes through the arch, first throwing some gift (beads or, in more modern times, money) into the trough. These gifts, presumably
[756] intended as an offering to the spirits, are the perquisites of the doctor, and everybody is supposed to contribute in turn.